

Maurice (M.)
SOCIAL RELIGION
EXEMPLIFIED,

IN AN ACCOUNT OF
THE FIRST SETTLEMENT OF
CHRISTIANITY,
IN THE
CITY OF CAERLUDD;
IN SEVERAL DIALOGUES.

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY BY THE
REV. MATTHIAS MORRICE.
THE FOURTH EDITION.

REVISED, CORRECTED AND ABRIDGED; WITH
OCCASIONAL NOTES, A COPIOUS INDEX, AND
A PREFACE, CONTAINING SOME
ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR,
BY EDWARD WILLIAMS.

For who hath despised the Day of small Things? Zech. vi. 10.

S H R E W S B U R Y:

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T H E

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

MR. *Matthias Morrice*, * the Author of the following Dialogues, was born in the parish of *Llandewy-Felfrey*, in the County of *Pembroke, South-Wales*, A. D. 1684. Of his ancestors we have nothing memorable, but that his parents were *honest* and *pious*; a privilege, however, of far greater consequence, than any which the most flattering temporal distinctions could have conferred, as thereby he was favoured with the inestimable blessing of a religious education. When he was first convinced of sin, or felt the importance of divine truths, I do not learn; but he was educated for the ministry at *Caermarthen*, under the tuition of the Rev. *William Evans*, who then superintended the Dissenting Academy at that place.

WHAT proficiency he made in *learning*, there and afterwards, we may form some judgment of from his writings. We do not indeed find in them the brightest traces of polite literature, or any extraordinary

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* OR MAURICE perhaps more commonly: But as Dr. *Dodridge*, to whom our Author could be no stranger, prefers the above spelling, when in his Lectures he refers to these Dialogues, and as the former Editions were anonymous, this mode is adopted.

dinary indications of the profound scholar; however, we have reason to conclude that he acquired a competent skill in the three learned languages inscribed upon the cross, Latin, Greek and Hebrew; and that he was versed in other useful branches of knowledge subservient to divinity. He observingly and devoutly contemplated the works of God, having pleasure therein, after the example of the royal Psalmist, which is a truly profitable philosophy. Happy were it, if those ministers who contemptuously arrogate to themselves the exclusive titles of *philosophers*, and *rational divines*,* would prosecute their studies

* It is far from being the Editor's intention to depreciate true learning, real science, or any useful art; and as he is conscious of no such design, he should be extremely sorry to be so misunderstood. But it grieves him to think, that the blessing of improved knowledge in the present day should be *abused*—that *literature* should exalt itself against *religion*—that the *bandmaid* should behave proudly to the *mistress*—assuming the consequential air, the supercilious brow, and the indignant eye, as if humble religion were not worthy to wait on her—to think, that this modern *Diana* should be so zealously adored, and that her numerous votaries should be ashamed of the pure religion of Jesus. “Such is the temper of the present age, (says a living writer who is well acquainted with it) that what is the greatest glory “of any man, is often imputed to him as a weakness.”* Yes, if he *lives by faith*, his religion is *irrational*; and if he submits his understanding implicitly to the *plain* decisions of revelation, rejecting novel, far-fetched criticisms, he is an incorrigible *bigot*.

THE reformation from popery, according to the *rational* taste, was valuable, not because it delivered our forefathers from corrupt glosses, and restored purity of *doctrine*, but because the right of private judgment was asserted, as a prelude to civil and religious liberty,

* KIPPIS's *Life of Sir John Pringle*.

studies and exert their superior talents, to promote the same noble end (the glory of God our Saviour,) from motives equally praise-worthy, which he aimed at, in a less splendid, but, perhaps, more useful track;

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liberty, and because superstition yielded the palm to freedom of inquiry; but *Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, Melancthon, Oecolampadius, Bucer, Beza, &c. &c.* must be struck from "the catalogue of the excellent and judicious persons who have gloried in being Rational Christians;" for they so submitted their reason to revelation as to give it full credit when it says of Christ, *This is the true God*; and, *He is the propitiation for our sins*. They believed, that three divine Persons existed in the unity of the Godhead. They believed an election of grace, and that the wicked shall be punished in hell for ever. And did these bright luminaries, with a noble list of protestant coadjutors, christian fathers, and heavenly minded martyrs, maintain these tenets through life and death, in their studies and pulpits, in prisons and in flames, because they never thought for themselves, or had no benevolence to their fellow-men? No: They were men that feared God, and therefore, in spite of corrupt reasoning, and opposition of science falsely so called, they firmly believed what He positively asserts of himself and his accountable creatures.

It is no small comfort, however, to reflect, (notwithstanding some bold prophecies that *Socinus* shall totally eclipse *Albanus* *) that Jesus Christ is the *Sun of righteousness*, and that all who fear the name of the Lord, in every age, shall behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth; though to many (solemn thought!) he hath been, and will be, a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence. — For my own part, I see no great probability that *Socinianism* will ever gain much ground among the people, so as to make sincere and steady converts of them, even according to its own avowed notion of conversion, though its ministers and writers may be multiplied. It would, probably, fall of itself in a land of Bibles, were it not for the learning and ingenuity of these individuals; for it is, in my humble

* *PRIESTLY'S history of the corruptions of christianity.*

—if they were indeed *lovers* and ardent followers, of true *wisdom*, instead of expending the vigour of genius and much precious time, as is often the case, upon fading colours, empty air, electrical subtleties, and

humble opinion, so tasteless a thing, so uninteresting, so remote from man's conscious feelings and wants, that it will never captivate his affections, awaken his zeal, rouse his lethargic soul with the grandeur of its objects; and therefore, upon their own principles, or *philosophically* speaking, it will never spread as a social and an affectionate religion. — "Do we observe among them (to borrow Dr. Taylor's words) solid, affectionate, powerful, lively, awakening *preachers*; aiming at the advancement of real vital religion in the hearts and lives of men? Are they, particularly, men of great devotion in *prayer*, uttered, as God enables them, from the abundance of their hearts and affections? Men of divine eloquence in pleading at the throne of grace, raising and melting the affections of their hearers, and happily instrumental in transfusing into their souls the same spirit and heavenly gift? Is *this* the ground of all their other qualifications? Are they excellent, because excellent, instant, and fervent in prayer? Does the presence and blessing of God appear in their assemblies and attend their labours? Are many converted and built up in godliness and sobriety by their prayers, pains, doctrines and conversations?" Rather are they not "pur-suing measures which have a manifest tendency to extinguish the light which foreign and English reformers kindled, to damp the spirit which they enlivened, and to dissipate and dissolve the societies which they raised and formed?" — Let the impartial judge. —

In every religious reformation, worthy of the name, the principal *means* of promoting it have been, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, a reverential *study* of the word of God, as the infallible standard of faith and practice, practical *expositions* of it closely applied to the conscience, and judicious *summaries* of christian doctrines, drawn up in catechisms, systems, &c. — But if these gentlemen proceed by exhorting their disciples to study their *bibles* with

and other speculations, which are seldom consecrated to devotional purposes. As to Mr. *Morris*, his principal improvement appears, when considered as

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with humility and prayer, a better antidote to the principles they mean to inculcate cannot be administered, while we have a *literal* translation of the scriptures.—It is not probable that they will ever produce a consistent devotional *commentary* on them;—a task too arduous for mere philosophic acumen, laboured criticism, or native genius. Nor is it likely they will be able to form a *system* or *body* of their own divinity, capable of doing any execution, among those who have been accustomed to read the new testament with reverence; and should such a thing appear, it would not be able, I believe, to support itself, because destitute of *bones, nerves and spirits*; I mean, strength of arguments, energy of motives, and, so to speak, the living pulse of animation, whereby the soul is warmed and quickened for spiritual exercises.—Their most formidable attacks are by the monthly papers, and other periodical publications, as these are disseminated far and wide into all parts of the kingdom; and are so much the more dangerous, by reason of—the artful *inuendos*, thrown against those who maintain the reformed doctrines, as bigots, narrow-minded, illiberal, absurd—the fine epithets and high encomiums they so *modestly* bestow upon themselves as rational, liberal, charitable, humane, candid, &c. &c. as if, doubtless they were the men, and *wisdom must dwell with them*.

CHRISTIAN reader, as thou wouldest maintain the fear and love of thy Maker, a tender conscience, true holiness, solid peace of mind, comfort in death, or a cheerful prospect of being ever with the Lord, be on thy guard against the baneful influence of the pretended, miscalled rational scheme, which *denies the Lord that bought thee*; for, in proportion as thou imbibest these notions,—“man is not born in sin, Christ is not a *DIVINE* Saviour, “God can dispense with the breach of his law without an adequate satisfaction, &c.”—thy soul will be withered, thy prayers lifeless and infrequent, thy zeal abated, thy conformity to the lawless world increased. Instead of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, a

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the sound divine, the faithful preacher, the edifying and entertaining writer.

HAVING finished his academical studies, he preached to a dissenting congregation at *Henllan*, not far from his native place; in which church, after he had preached there for some time, an unhappy division took place. What was the immediate cause of it I am not particularly informed, but have reason to think it originated in difference of sentiment respecting church discipline; however, party spirit ran high, and an actual separation ensued. Separations are, doubtless, distressing to all lovers of peace and unity, yet *these* sometimes, as the lovers of *truth*, are constrained to adopt such painful alternatives. It is a comforting reflection, that the triumphant Head of the church watches all its motions,

secret pride and a sceptical humour will take place; to all this will succeed a contemptuous disdain of the most serious christians, founded on the idea of thy superior attainments, or at least upon the unscriptural fancy that all men will be saved at last, however they act here. To do all to the glory of God, to glory in the cross of Christ, to spend and to be spent in his service, to exhort thy neighbour against the deceitfulness of sin, and sinful error, will be thy strange work and the aversion of thy soul. From which evils, come they from what quarter they may, dear reader, the Lord deliver thee.—A sincere regard to truth and its importance, and love to thy precious soul, have extorted from me this note. See *Col.* ii. 8, 9. *Beware lest any man spoil (make a prey of) you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, (or according to the elements of that literature which are so much regarded in the world) and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.* See a heavenly model, *Heb.* i. 6.—and *Rev.* v. 11—14. See the obligation to follow it, *Matt.* vi. 10,—and *Psa.* ii. 12,

tions, and over-rules them for good. He and several others accordingly formed themselves into a separate church at *Rhydyceisiaid*, a place in the same neighbourhood, where they continued for some time under Mr. *Morrice's* pastoral care. During his stay there (about A. D. 1712.) another society was formed at *Glandŵr*, a few miles from *Rhydyceisiaid*, and which was considered for a time as a branch of the other; but for many years back hath been by far the largest: Consequently the two churches changed sides, and the original church at *Rhydyceisiaid* became a branch of that at *Glandŵr*. We may here remark, that the old congregation at *Henllan*, enjoying the ministerial labours of the Rev. Mr. *Thomas Morgan*, and that at *Glandŵr*, under the pastoral inspection of the Rev. Mr. *John Griffiths*, are two of the largest dissenting churches in all *South Wales*: Where it may be truly said, that great numbers run to and fro and increase knowledge. Thus we have often reason to say of the great Ruler of all events, that —

“ From seeming evil, he still educes good.”

It is no uncommon thing for those who are distinguished for ministerial diligence and faithfulness, to meet with the censure of their brethren, and to be treated with opprobrious names. Thus it fared with Mr. *Morrice*. The success he met with stirred up envy, and he was soon pointed out by his enemies as a *ranting* preacher. With this pretence, through the heat of the animosities occasioned by the disputes of the several parties, fomented by bigotry and misguided zeal, instruments were contrived to seize him, and to deliver him into the

hands of a press-gang. This was accordingly effected; which afforded his persecutors a temporary triumph. But the master he served soon provided means to effect his escape from this disagreeable situation; for, by the friendly zeal and address of a neighbouring gentleman, he was rescued, and conveyed by night out of their reach. Thus circumstanced, he went immediately with some of his friends to *Olney* in *Bucks*, where the good people there, after having sufficient proof of his ministerial abilities and holy conversation, would have gladly had him for their Pastor; but some obstructions intervening, that connection was prevented. From *Olney*, he was invited to the independent church at *Rowell* in *Northamptonshire*, where he afterwards settled, and spent the remainder of his days. As it is not customary for ministers, among the stricter independents, to enter upon a new pastoral relation without a letter of dismission from the church they before belonged to; he was therefore regularly dismissed from the church of Christ assembling at *Rhydyceistfaiid* (who had then Mr. *Lewis Thomas* for their Pastor) to the church at *Rowell*, *November 1, 1714*. But it is apprehended that he officiated first in the capacity of assistant to the Rev.^d Mr. *Richard Davies*.

THIS was the part of Christ's vineyard which providence assigned to his cultivation and care, and there is abundant proof that he was not only laborious but also successful in it. He had, particularly, great success, for years after his first settlement there, in what every faithful minister of the gospel hath much at heart — WINNING SOULS TO CHRIST. This, indeed, may appear to many professors

fessors of religion, in the present day of high and rapid IMPROVEMENTS, in *christianity* as well as *philosophy*, as a vulgar, old-fashioned employ: However, One who cannot err hath declared, that *He who winneth souls is wise*; and it was a triumph worthy one who was not behind the chief of the apostles, that he had *espoused souls to Christ*. Without this, in fact, christianity dwindles into vain parade and fruitless speculation. Some *faithful* ministers are less favoured in this respect than others but we may boldly assert, that there are none of that description who do not ardently desire this fruit of their labour. Mr. *Morrice* fought and obtained it. Many were added to the church, and the waste places in this part of Zion were comforted. Happy seasons! Who would not pray for them?—Lord, *let thy kingdom come!*

BUT these days of pleasing prosperity were followed, in the last years of his ministry, with clouds and troubles. He had many and great trials from *loose walkers*; who were, however, very strictly dealt with by the church under his care; the discipline, while he was their Pastor, being rigidly (but scripturally) exact. Great opposition he met with, also, from some in his congregation, who very zealously espoused and propagated the error, “that it is not the duty of unconverted sinners to believe in Christ;”*

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* I GLADLY embrace this opportunity of recommending a late valuable publication, entitled, *The Gospel of Christ worthy of all acceptance*; by Mr. *Andrew Fuller*. Where the attentive and impartial reader will find the above-mentioned error fairly examined, and, in my apprehension, fully confuted. Sold by *Buckland, &c, London*; *A. Brown and Son, Bristol*; and *Smith, Sheffield*,

on which occasion some pamphlets were published on both sides. A principal leader of this faction was a Mr. *Lewis Wayman*, who was a member of his congregation, and who had drawn over several to his party. Though Mr. *Morrice* was a lover and warm defender of the doctrines of grace, yet he did not connive at *licentiousness*; nay, rather, his soul was fired within him when he observed, that any made use of pretended grace as a cloak for immoral practices; and as all *error* hath a pernicious effect upon the hearts and lives of christians, he justly concluded that it should be seasonably and vigorously withstood.

HAVING thus far considered our Author in his ministerial qualifications and employments, it may not be amiss to subjoin a few words respecting his *personal religion*. He was indeed *a man of God*, eminently devoted to his glory in heart, lip and life; as those who knew him best have always testified. That he was *sound in the faith*, which was once delivered to the saints, and earnestly contended for it, is sufficiently evident from his writings, whereby he yet speaketh. But this soundness consisted not in mere speculation, he had an impressive sense of the importance of divine truths, and experienced their transforming influence on his mind. *Holiness* appeared to him *beautiful* as well as necessary; and therefore after *that* he constantly breathed. It is hardly necessary to mention, that he was a lover of *order* in the things of God, and that the purity of evangelical *discipline* in the churches of Christ lay near his heart; of this the present publication is an ample proof. He not only contended for
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orthodoxy of sentiment, but strenuously urged, through the whole course of his ministry, an upright and heavenly *conversation*; of which he was a very illustrious pattern to the flock. That he was of a *sociable* disposition, and zealously (I hope I may add successfully) engaged in promoting *social religion*, will hardly be doubted by any unprejudiced reader of this volume. In short, the prosperity of Zion in general, and of his own charge in particular, was the subject of his ardent wishes and constant supplications. — The active life of so holy a man; and so useful a minister, must doubtless furnish many incidents and anecdotes worthy of notice, had we been happily acquainted with them. Different persons have been applied to on this occasion, one of whom writes as follows: “ I attempted a scrutiny about the queries you were pleased to send me respecting Mr. Morrice; after all I could get but a very imperfect account, because his contemporaries are gone after him to the land of forgetfulness.” And the present worthy minister of the same church at *Roswell*, the Rev. Mr. *Moses Gregson*, who came there about eight years after Mr. *Morrice*’s death, and who obligingly communicated what intelligence he could procure, tells me, after giving a very honourable testimony, from the information of those who best knew him, respecting his soundness in the faith, his heavenly conversation, &c. “ That not above two or three are now living who knew him; and no wonder, says he, since I have been with them, through the good hands of my most gracious God upon me, no less than thirty-eight years, three quarters.”

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WHEN nothing very important is preserved, relative to such worthy persons, which often happens through the carelessness of friends or the injuries of time, methinks the very fragments should be gathered that nothing more be lost. We therefore beg leave to add a few things further respecting his family connections. His first wife was one *Elizabeth Humphrey*, by whom he had several children, who all died in infancy. His second wife was *Elizabeth Buck*, of *Saffron-Walden*, in *Essex*, by whom he had three sons, *Humphrey* the eldest, *Matthias* and *Ebenexer*, and one daughter named *Elizabeth*. All his children are now numbered among the dead, except *Ebenexer*, who was brought up to the law, lives now at *Saffron-Walden*, and who possesses an affluent fortune. "Oh! that he had (devoutly adds "my informant) a double portion of his most excellent father's spirit."

HAVING, through grace, served God in his generation, borne witness to his truth with fidelity and courage, finished his course and kept the faith, he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus September 1, 1738, aged 34. He was buried under the communion table of his Meeting-House at *Rowell*, where his last wife is also buried close by him.

It may be expected that I should say something of Mr. *Morris* as an *Author*, for he wrote several small treatises, some in English and some in Welsh. He published a piece entitled *The acts and maniments of mercy*, giving an account of Mr. *John Bequerley*, Mr. *Thomas Browning*, and Mr. *Richard Dawiss*, all of them Pastors of the church at *Rowell* before him. He published also a treatise entitled,
Faith

Faith encouraged, being an exposition of *Hab. vi. 4—6, 10, 26.* and *1 John i. 16.* Another discourse on the *Unpardonable blasphemy*, or sin against the Holy Ghost, from *Matt. xii. 31, 32.* Also *Meditations on the great design of Christ*, from *1 Tim. i. 15.* — *The work of the Holy Spirit in prayer*, from *Rom. viii. 26.* — Some sermons on *Evangelical love*. He had a long and smart controversy with Dr. Gill, on the mode and subject of *Baptism*. — His publications in *Welsh* were, *Cywir a Ffyddlon*, by way of Dialogue. A translation of *Chauncy's Form of Godliness*, and *Dr. Owen's Brief Instruction*. — But his principal performance is, *Social Religion exemplified*, which was a work of time, and the result of no small degree of attention and experience. It hath been said, and it is highly probable, that though the *names* in this book are feigned, many of the *characters* were real; and that while he was giving an *ideal* representation of the church at *Caerludd*, or *London*, he had a reference to many real *facts* that had fallen under his own notice, and in which he was personally concerned. What the last Editor of the *Life of Mr. Philip Henry** (*Rev. Job Orton*) says of that Book, is literally true of this, — “Three editions of it have been already sold, which is

* A most edifying little volume, well known to many in the religious world, but probably not to some who may read this note. Should any be induced to purchase it on this recommendation, they will find that it deserves the *strongest*; — that it is a *beautiful delineation* of primitive christianity and the power of godliness; — where *social religion*, as well as personal holiness, are drawn to the life and eminently *exemplified*; — where, in a word, the doctrine of the life of God in the soul of man derives a striking proof, and a venerable sanction, Sold by J. Eddowes, Shrewsbury,

“ is an uncommon mark of public regard to such
“ a design. It has been long out of print, difficult to
“ be procured, and much sought after by persons of
“ very different religious sentiments and persuasions.”
One of these editions Mrs. Cooke, of Stoke-Newington, had printed at her own expence.

I SHALL now beg leave to make some observations on the work and the present edition of it. When I first perused it I could not help observing, that the Author's *design* was excellent, which was to exemplify — and in exemplifying to promote — SOCIAL RELIGION. The *plan* adopted for this purpose seemed, also, happily calculated to answer this important end, as it is well adapted to excite and preserve the attention, to inform the judgment, and to interest the affections of the generality of religious readers. The *execution* of the plan, likewise, is not destitute of many excellencies. The diversity of characters introduced, the happy intermixture of instruction and delight, and a pleasing variety made subservient to the unity of design, are visible through the whole. But I also observed, that as the Author had many excellencies, he laboured under some obvious *defects*; among which I reckoned the tedious prolixity and needless repetitions that so often occurred. Sometimes a quaintness of expression and style seemed capable of amendment, without trespassing too much on our Author's mode of writing; nor was it apprehended, that a sentence awkwardly turned, though in the mouth of a mechanic or peasant, was at all necessary to constitute the simplicity of narration or familiarity of dialogue. Perhaps I may add, that now and then, among the bright-

est colours of genuine piety, a tincture of bigotry discovered itself. Some *sentiments*, too, which the generality of orthodox christians looked upon as indefensible peculiarities, stood in their way as obstacles to their pleasure and improvement. Among these I reckon his notion of the *absolute salvation of the children of believers*, his singular argument for the *right of infants to baptism*, and some other matters perhaps of less consequence. It hath been therefore my endeavour, in this edition, to preserve the beauties and useful parts of the book entire, and to expunge as far as practicable, whatever appeared deficient, redundant, or exceptionable. A few occasional *notes* are added, sometimes with a view to qualify a rigid sentiment, at other times to contract a laboured defense of a precarious point into a small compass; and when that is of an argumentative nature, his arguments and proofs are arranged under proper heads, that nothing of importance might be omitted: For, as our Author hath some admirers in those things that appeared to me unworthy of a place in the body of the work, it might have been displeasing to such to have his thoughts entirely suppressed. By this method, though the book be reduced in bulk, the whole substance of it is preserved. And I believe I may say, that there is scarce a single idea of real value in the former editions, which is not included in this; at least this was aimed at. Some notes of a miscellaneous nature are also subjoined.

I HAVE hinted already at the deficiency observable in the *language* of the original, accordingly some liberty hath been taken with it; but to render it quite

quite unexceptionable to modern refinement hath not been attempted, as being equally impracticable and unnecessary. These Dialogues were not at first composed, nor are they now published, with a view to solicit the *vain applause* of mankind, but to subserve their most *substantial interests*; the low and illiterate not excepted. These have souls, precious and immortal. Their interest and capacity, manners and circumstances should be consulted. Brilliancy of wit, compass of thought, depth and sublimity of ideas, are often found — without CHRIST the hope of glory. The beauties and the charms of language, the elegant and the nervous diction, the sweetest harmony of periods and the justest symmetry of parts, with all the imaginable graces of composition, are daily found — totally unconnected with *the one thing needful*. Many have possessed them to an astonishing degree, while their precious souls (themselves in the moments of dissolution being witness) have been starved to death. Literary glory had been their chief good, after *this* they hungered and thirsted, and upon this they daily fed: But death, the great teacher death, awoke them, and behold it was a *dream*! Whereas many unlettered cottagers (mortifying reflection to the pride of science!) determined not to know any thing *save Jesus Christ and him crucified*; with rustick phrases, broken accents and a throbbing heart, are observed pressing into the kingdom of God. This familiar treatise hath a peculiar respect to their improvement. Nevertheless should any of superior genius and taste condescend to give it a perusal, it is hoped they will find through the whole a *natural simplicity* with which they will not be displeased, and
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some strokes *inimitably pathetic*, with which they will be delighted.

I must not omit taking notice of the *originality* of the plan and conduct of the piece. This of itself

* This consists partly in joining together the dialogue form and fictitious history. — "Dialogue writing may be executed in *two* ways, either as direct conversation, where none but the speakers appear, — or as the recital of a conversation, where the author himself appears, and gives an account of what passed in discourse," (BLAIR'S *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, Lect. xxxviii.) In the following dialogues, our author hath in my opinion, happily united the advantages of *both* these ways. A dialogue, continues the same ingenious author, when it is well conducted, is much more difficult in the execution than is commonly imagined. For it requires more, than merely the introduction of different persons speaking in succession. It ought to be a natural and spirited representation of real conversation; exhibiting the character and manners of the several speakers, and suiting to the character of each, that peculiarity of thought and expression which distinguishes him from another. — But the greatest part of modern dialogue writers have no idea of any composition of this sort; and bating the outward forms of conversation, and that one speaks and another answers, it is quite the same as if the author spoke in person throughout the whole. He sets up a *Philoteas*, perhaps, and a *Philoteas*, or an A and a B; who, after mutual compliments, and after admiring the fineness of the morning or evening, and the beauty of the prospects around them, enter into conference concerning some grave matter; and all that we know farther of them is, that the one personates the author, a man of learning, no doubt, and of good principles; and the other is a man of straw, set up to propose some trivial objections; over which the first gains a most entire triumph, and leaves his sceptical antagonist at the end much humbled, and, generally convinced of his error. This is a very frigid and insipid manner of writing; the more so, as it is an attempt toward something

itself it must be owned, is no certain proof of the excellence of a work, as there are authors originally *bad* as well as *good*; but if the design of it be praise

"thing, which we see the author cannot support." (*Ibid.*) How far the following work is executed in such a manner as to answer these equitable demands, and to avoid the faults here pointed out, must be left to the judgment of the impartial publick.—

"IN fact (says Dr. BLAIR, in the abovementioned lecture) "*fictitious histories* might be employed for very useful purposes. They furnish one of the best channels for conveying instruction, for painting human life and manners, for shewing the errors into which we are betrayed by our passions, for rendering virtue amiable and vice odious. The effect of well contrived stories, towards accomplishing these purposes, is stronger than any effect that can be produced by simple and naked instruction; and hence we find, that the wisest men in all ages have more or less employed fables or fictions, as the vehicles of knowledge.—It is not, therefore, the nature of this sort of writing, considered in itself, but the faulty manner of its execution, that can expose it to any contempt. Lord Bacon takes notice of our taste for fictitious history, as a proof of the greatness and dignity of the human mind. He observes very ingeniously, that the objects of this world, and the common train of affairs which we behold going on in it, do not fill the mind, nor give it entire satisfaction. We seek for something that shall expand the mind in a greater degree; we seek for more heroic and illustrious deeds, for more diversified and surprising events, for a more splendid order of things, a more regular and just distribution of rewards and punishments than what we find here; because we meet not with these in true history, we have recourse to fictitious. We create worlds according to our fancy, in order to gratify our capacious desires; accommodating the appearances of things to the desires of the mind, not bringing down the mind, as history and philosophy do, to the course of events." These reflections are not only ingenious, but also wise and solid—justified by uncontested facts, and sanctified by scripture authority.

praise-worthy, the subject matter valuable, and the execution accordingly, the circumstance of originality becomes desirable and important. Not to mention higher works, this is sufficiently evident in *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress*, which, by the bye, is not perhaps more an *original* than *Social Religion exemplified*.

I HOPE my younger brethren in the *ministry* will not be displeased if I call *their* candid and practical attention to the contents of this treatise, as it may suggest to them many useful hints for the profitable discharge of their important function, and as they will have it in their power to recommend to their people, in an entertaining and familiar vehicle, an essential (though much neglected) part of christian knowledge—*Church Discipline*.

It is hoped, moreover, that *candidates* for the sacred ministry will find their account in the perusal; for here they may behold, delineated in miniature at least, all classes of professing men and their different manners; which must be confessed to be no small advantage to those who are entering upon the like scenes, and who often through unavoidable inexperience of this kind, and the nature of their academical studies, appear in the character of Christian Pastors often to a great disadvantage. The best remedy for such inexperience, is, 'To have a case naturally and pertinently *exemplified*.'

THOSE congregational churches, where evangelical discipline is at a low ebb, would do well to attend to what is here inculcated; for if *some* church order be essentially necessary, and that *best* which is most scriptural, is it not wonderful, that so many societies of christians in the present day, should behold it with,

out

out concern trampled upon, languishing, expiring among them! Yes, it is truly astonishing, that reveling clubs and bands of robbers, from a conviction of their utility, will *farm* laws and rules for themselves, while those who are enjoined by an oracle from heaven, to *do all things decently and in order*, most criminally *disregard* the divine laws recorded and published for their use!

THERE are in our land many congregational churches in their *infant* state, who have been called with an holy calling from darkness to light, and from bondage to liberty, but who, either for want of proper encouragement and instruction; or both, continue in an *unformed* and irregular state. Hence animosities, contentions, errors, divisions, &c. like a desperate rabble, under the command of the prince of darkness, besiege them, and threaten destruction; while they, not *terrible as an army with banners*, but like an *undisciplined* troop, are not in a capacity to repel their force. To the perusal and service of such, the following sheets are humbly recommended.

I CANNOT help thinking but this book might be very profitably read in *families*, as it is in general suited to the capacities, and often to the circumstances of domesticks, who, in hearing many parts of it read, could no less than be attentive, and feel themselves interested in what they hear. It is therefore earnestly recommended, once more as a *family* book.

It is hardly needful to remark, that the *Author's countrymen* will find themselves peculiarly entertained by the frequent occurrence of *British* names that are pertinently expressive of the characters exemplified.

How

However, for the sake of the mere *english* reader, these names are explained in the *Index*.

UPON the whole, it is presumed, that *this edition* will recommend itself to the serious christian reader, especially the poor, not only by its edifying tendency; but also on account of its *moderate price*.—May the blessing of God eminently attend it, that it may answer the purposes of his own glory, the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom, the order of his churches, the edification and salvation of precious souls! *Amen.*

OSWESTRY,
November, 1785.

E. WILLIAMS.

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SOCIAL RELIGION EXEMPLIFIED.

DIALOGUE I.

*The Introduction. The Druids noted. The Roman Invasion a Mean of the greatest Deliverance. The primitive Churches. The first Churches in Britain, what. Dewi and Yefan, two Gentlemen of Caerludd, converted to Christianity at Hyfrydle. How they were entertained by a godly Landlord at Supper. Their Conference with the Bishop Ffyddlon. His Presents and Advice to them. They depart for Caerludd.**

IT is not a very difficult thing for a religious mind to form ideas of a certain Village, much to be desired and delighted in, called therefore *Po-theina*; where the Eternal God, as the God of

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* For an explanation of *British*, or other difficult words, the reader is referred to the Index,

Universal Nature, has ordered every thing to the best advantage for a contemplative mind; and social communications and improvements.—For the former, the circumambient air, serene, refreshing and wholesome; enclosures and meadows, green and delightful; adorned and enriched with every thing useful and pleasant: Chrystal springs, purling streams, agreeable retired walks, either in the open space, or in the shades among trees, low and fruitful, or lofty and majestick. The houses not contiguous, but situated at a becoming distance, surrounded with their gardens and orchards; and thus disposed, they encompass a most delightful Green, common to them all; and, therefore, most convenient for social conversation: Where also the Eternal God, as the God of all Grace, has reached the Souls of the inhabitants by his Spirit; and has converted them to himself, making them truly holy and humble; leading them to look to the risen Redeemer as exceeding precious; from whom they receive all Grace, Gifts and Endowments. Such the *Place*, far from the noise of the world, and the pomp and grandeur of time; and such the *Inhabitants*, strangers to the pride, luxury, ambition and tyranny of the degenerate crowd, but not to Christ and themselves.

THE *Custom* of the inhabitants of *Patheina*, was thus: On every *Lord's Day* they went, old and young, publickly to worship God, in a christian congregation, at some distance from them, to which they belonged. At evening they met among themselves to pray, to repeat what they had heard, and declare what their Souls had experienced; then sung a Psalm

a Psalm and concluded with Prayer. One *Week-day* evening they also set apart for prayer and religious conference; which for the greater advantage of the neighbourhood, they kept from house to house, and every family was glad when their turn came to enjoy it. Besides this, there was another evening in the week, which the principal inhabitants generally held for civil conversation, but always seasoned with a religious spirit and design: And to add to the pleasure of this meeting, they often had it under an ancient well-spread *Oak*, which stood at one end of this green, under which benches for the purpose were fixed; from whence they had a prospect of their several habitations.

HERE their *Conversation* sometimes turned upon what directly concerned them as husbandmen; sometimes upon history, with moral and religious remarks; sometimes upon the works of creation; and the wisdom and mysteries of providence; sometimes upon the person, offices and work of Christ; the divine perfections, the controversies of the day, and the wisdom of Christ in suffering them. But their particular conversation which I have before me to give some account of, concerns the matter, form, order and *Discipline* of a Church according to Christ's institution. The occasion of which conference take as follows:

SOME of the neighbours being come on a certain time to the spot, had no sooner seated themselves, but another very useful neighbour, named *Theophilus*, came and took his seat among them; and with a pleasant countenance, says, My friends and neighbours, I am glad to see you.

Philalethes, one of the company, answered, And we are glad to see you so chearful, as your countenance discovers. May I assume my wonted freedom, and ask what is the reason of it?

Theophilus. I think it becomes us, who are saved by Grace, to be always chearful: But to tell you the truth, I could not at present help smiling to think how much like the *Druids*,* among the old *Britons*, we appear.

Philalethes. I have heard of them; but if I remember well, they were a kind of barbarous *bards*; and superstitious priests; pray wherein can we be like them?

Theophilus. Really you almost spoiled my fancy; for I had none of this in view, but the vast affection they had for groves and *oak*-trees, under which they loved to philosophize; and the thought of our sitting and conversing under a spreading *Oak*, with
its

* The learned are not agreed about the etymology of the term; some deriving it from the *Hebrew*, DERESSIM, Contemplators; others from the *Greek*, *δρυς*, an *Oak*; but it is hard to imagine how the *Druids* should come to speak *Greek*: Others from the *British*, *Drauw*, whence they take *δρυς* to be derived, which is Mr. *Merritt's* supposition, and the most probable. See *Chambers's Cyclopædia*, article *DRUIDS*. Of all the ancient writers *Julius Cæsar* has given the fullest and clearest account of them. He supposes *Britain* to be the seat of their origin, and observes among other things, that some of them remained twenty years in a state of pupillage, because they are said to have gotten by heart a great number of verses; and one reason assigned was, lest the culture of the memory should be neglected. — *Cæsar de Bello Gallico*, lib. vi.

In their common course of learning they are said to have taught their scholars twenty four thousand verses.

its delightful *Mistletoe*,* made me entertain the merry conceit that we were *Druids*. — However, they had some things really commendable; they believed and taught the immortality of the soul, and observed strict rules of justice; were fervent in their devotions; the sight of which struck the *Roman* soldiers, who never were used to see any thing like it, with such terror, that they could neither fight nor flee.†

Philalethes. A very pleasant thought, and capable of good improvement, especially if one can, in a true light, but see himself such a *Druid* as our father *Abraham* was, who, among the oaks of *Mamre* made an altar and worshipped:‡ And some have thought the *Druids* ignorantly derived their superstition thence.

Christophilus, another of the company, said, Then miserable followers of *Abraham* they: But no wonder, when even those who came out of *Abraham's* loins sacrificed unto idols upon the tops of mountains, and burnt incense upon the hills, under oaks, and poplars, and elms, because the shadow thereof was good. || — But since cruel superstition reigned over the ancient *Britons*, notwithstanding their zeal and sincerity, it becomes us to admire divine grace, that ever the gospel was sent to this island, and that

B. 3

under

* *Ad viscum Druidæ, Druidæ cantare solebant. Ovid.*

Pliny relates, that the *Druids* held nothing so sacred as the *Mistletoe* of the *Oak*; that they sought groves of *Oak* for their residence, and made use of the leaves of that tree in all their sacred rites. One of the Priests clothed in white, in the beginning of the year, gathered the *Mistletoe* with a golden sith. *Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. xvi.*

† *Taciti Annal. lib. xiv.* ‡ *Septuagint Gen. xiii. 18.* || *Hosea iv. 13.*

under this *Oak*, we can bless God, "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son."

Philalethes. That's well observed; and, my dear neighbour, *Theophilus*, I hope it may be useful in this small company, if you please to give some account of the early and amazing methods God by his providence took to convey his Gospel into *Britain*; to convert sinners, and gather *Churches* for his service and praise within this land.

Theophilus. It is most certain that the *Roman* Invasion was nothing but rank ambition, injustice and cruelty: The very history of it, at this distance, raises in every true *Briton* the most just indignation. But when a christian considers, that by such means God was pleased to convey his Gospel to the people who sat in darkness; and in the region of the shadow of death, his heart is melted down in thankfulness to the Lord for the *Roman* conquest. *Out of the eater comes forth meat, and sweetness out of the strong*. Together with the *British* wealth, great numbers of the inhabitants, and many of them noble, were transported to *Rome*. They did not know for what end, but the eternal God, whose thoughts are higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth, knew. There God met many of them by his Grace, and they found Him whom they had not sought. — There was at *Rome* in those days a church of Christ, famous for its faith; it was spoken of throughout the world, (a) and *Britain* heard the sound. Paul was there, and with him doubtless many

(a) *Rom. i. 8.*

many of the *Britons* conversed. He mentions one British Lady, who was well known to the churches, whose name was *Claudia*. She was a christian of great eminence, as may be gathered from the Apostle's naming her upon such an occasion: * (2 *Tim.* iv. 21.) It is not improbable that there were many more of her nation called by grace at *Rome*; who, fired with zeal for the interest of their Redeemer, and with love for their native country, would urge the assistance of the Apostle *Paul* and others. Who came first with the Gospel to *Britain* is not certainly known; some say, *Joseph* of *Arimathea*, sent by the Evangelist *Philip* from *Gaul*; others, *Simon Zelotes*; and some say the Apostle *Paul* himself. † But, by whatever means, hither, through Grace, the Gospel was brought about the middle of the first century.—Indeed the first Christian King in *Britain*, and in the world, was *Lucius*, who sent ambassadors to *Eleutherius* at *Rome*, for instructions, and rules of government; who sent him word again, “That
“ as they had by God's mercy in *Britain*, both
“ the new and old Testament, let the king by the
“ advice of his realm take thence a law and rule
“ as God's vicar.” † But Christianity was in the land

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above

* As for her other accomplishments, she has been highly celebrated by *Martial*, lib. ii. epig. 54.

† Vide *Usserii Britan. Eccles. Antiquit.* cap. I.

† *Usser* places *Lucius's* conversion, and his first application to *Eleutherius*, by *Elwan* and *Medwan* in 176; and a second for instruction to govern in 179: Archbishop *Parker* asserts, that the Roman edict for abolishing the *Druids* in *Britain*, was the means of turning his thoughts to the true religion; but the existence of
such

above a hundred years before him, the Gospel preached in its purity, many souls converted, and doubtless Churches gathered according to Christ's pure institutions.

Christophilus. Oh! my heart is warmed! my soul is filled with thankfulness that Christ should visit this land; that *Great Britain* among the isles, should wait for his law! and that he should make the *Roman* cloud a chariot to bear him! the *Roman* cruelty the path of his mercy! let us exalt his name together!

Philalethes. But pray, *Theophilus*, let us have the pleasure of hearing from you, some account of the First Churches in *Britain*, if you can give us any.

Theophilus. If you can give us an account what Churches they are we find in the new Testament, and if our neighbour *Philologus* here present, of whose ability and readiness to assist we have had experience, will please to give us some account what Churches may be met with in *earliest* antiquity; and if our kind neighbour *Syllogisticus* will lead us a little into the reason of *Divine Institutions*; then I can modestly venture to tell you, what sort of Churches were those first gathered and settled in *Great Britain*.

Philalethes. With regard to the task you call me to, I cheerfully embrace it, and declare that our Lord's own account (*Matt.* xviii. 15.—20.) fixes and determines my judgment for ever. Corrupt endeavours to cloud and perplex the text, move me not.

The

such an edict is doubtful. *Lucius* was filled by the Britons, *Lleu Llawr Mawr*, i. e. *Great Light*, or the *Illustrious*; because in his time, and by his means, the glorious *Light* of the Gospel was more generally spread among them.

The words are very plain, and wherever there is a community that answers to them, there is a Church of Christ.—“ If thy brother shall trespass
“ against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee
“ and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained
“ thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take
“ with thee one or two more, that in the mouth
“ of two or three witnesses, every word may be
“ established; and if he shall neglect to hear them,
“ tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear
“ the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man,
“ and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever
“ ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven;
“ and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed
“ in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you
“ shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that
“ they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my
“ Father, which is in heaven; for where two or three
“ are gathered together in my name, there am I in
“ the midst of them.” Such a church is intended
here, we see, as can and should meet together for
divine worship;—as comes to be a church by *vol-*
untary consent and agreement; as gives unto par-
ticular members especial relation unto itself, and
unto each other. Therefore it is not said, go tell
a church, but tell *the* church; and if thy *brother*
offend thee. Yea such a church is intended to which
a poor *brother* may have ready access; and which
as a church is to reason, judge and determine;—
and whose determinations must be according to Christ’s
word, that he as Lord of the kingdom of Heaven
may set his seal to them.

AGAIN; the churches we read of in scripture had their ministering servants, who were not to lord it over them, but to serve them in the Lord; namely, *Bishops* and *Deacons*; (b) the *first* according to the only meaning of the *Greek* word (*ἐπισκοποι*) were *Overseers* of the Flock of Christ, (c) to feed it with the pure word of truth; and minister appointed ordinances; and in other words were called pastors, teachers and elders; the others according to their primitive institution, were to serve tables. (d)

THE scripture churches then were made up of visible *saints*, (e) they were living stones, (f) *sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*; (g) were partakers of the Holy Spirit of Christ, as a Spirit of Faith and Prayer. (h) Also the churches mentioned in the new Testament were several or many in one neighbourhood; so we read of the churches in *Judea*, (i) which was but a small tract of land; and the churches in *Galilee*, (k) yet smaller; and we read of the churches in *Galatia*, (l) and of the churches in *Macedonia*, (m) as distinct from that of *Philippi*, which was a town in that country; the church at *Corinth*, and the church of *Cenchrea*, which was a little town near *Corinth*.

I MUST add, that it is expressly said of the new Testament churches, that they had each of them their assemblies of the *whole* church, for the enjoyment of privileges, and the discharge of duties.

So

(b) *Phil.* i. 1. (c) *Acts* xx. 17, 28. (d) *Acts* vi. 2. (e) *Rom.* i. 7. (f) *1 Peter* ii. 5. (g) *2 Cor.* vi. 11. (h) *Rom.* viii. 9. *2 Cor.* iv. 13. *Rom.* viii. 26. (i) *Acts* ix. 31. (k) *Acts* ix. 31. (l) *Gal.* i. 2. (m) *2 Cor.* viii. 1.

So the church at *Jerusalem*; (n) so the church of *Antioch* (o) called the *multitude*. (p) The whole church of *Corinth* assembled in one place, for the solemn worship of God, and the exercise of discipline: (q) at present I shall add no more; *Philologus* by his countenance appears ready for his part.

Philologus. Not so ready, but I was very willing to attend to what you had further to say; but seeing you choose for the present, to add no more (which puts me in expectation to hear more from you another time) I take liberty to observe, That it is evident from the primitive writers, the members of those churches were *godly* persons, acquainted with the life and power of religion; and by a heavenly conversation discovered themselves to be *temples of the Holy Ghost*. So *Clemens* of *Rome* in the first century, * writes in the name of the church he was pastor of, to the church of *Corinth*, and salutes them, "The called and sanctified through the will of God by Jesus Christ our Lord:" † And that we may farther learn, what sort of persons they were, he observes, that there was a *plentiful* effusion

B 6

of

(n) *Acts* v. 11. vi. 1, 2. xv. 12, 22. and xxii. 22. (o) *Acts* xiv. 27. (p) *Acts* xv. 30. (q) *1 Cor.* xiv. 25, 26. *1 Cor.* xi. 17, 20. *1 Cor.* v. 4.

* The *exact* time in which he flourished and wrote, is not agreed upon among the learned. See *Wake's Preliminary Discourse to the genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers*. chap. 2. § 77. He lived at *Rome*, a companion probably and fellow-labourer with *St. Paul*, and is generally supposed to be the person the apostle refers to, (*Phil.* iv. 3.) whose name was written in the Book of Life. It is certain he was pastor of the church at *Rome*,

† *Clem. Epist. ad Corinth. Salut.*

of the Holy Spirit upon them all; and that they were engaged in earnest *prayers* for all the brotherhood, night and day. They were not poor prayerless creatures, unconcerned about the glory of God, and the good of their brethren, but with fervour and constancy sought the face of God. Such were the members of the primitive churches. And *Origen** says, "We do all that lies in our power that our congregations be composed of good and wise men."† Vain and ignorant men were not admitted; they must be made wise unto salvation first, and when they offered themselves to communion they were not rashly received, nor yet were they neglected, but visited by the servants of Christ, and instructed, as the same author informs us.

TERTULLIAN† says, "We were not received church members that we might cease from sin, but because we have already ceased."‡ Hence that trite saying amongst them, "Holy things to holy persons."

AGAIN, those primitive churches had their officers as in the days of the Apostles, namely *Bishops* and *Deacons*. Wherever the churches sojourned, whether in

* An illustrious *Greek* Father of the christian church, who flourished in the beginning of the third century. He was a sufferer in the persecution under *Decius*, and died at *Tyre* in the reign of *Gallus*.

† ORIGIN *contra Celsum*. lib. iii.

‡ A celebrated *Latin* Father of the christian church, who flourished in the latter part of the second, and beginning of the third century.

§ TERTULLIAN *de Penitentia*.

in towns or villages, *there* their bishops and deacons were for their service. — So the above named *Clemens*, speaking of the apostles, says, “ That they preached the word through regions, and cities, and appointed the first fruits, or the first converts, after a spiritual trial of them, to be bishops and deacons.”* They devoted themselves to minister to the other saints, for their edification, in faith, holiness and comfort.

IN the next place, those primitive churches had the power of *choosing* their own pastors: those that were to serve Christ in that capacity, were to be set apart by the *whole* church, or congregation. *Clemens* tells us, that thus the first officers in the church were constituted by the apostles’ direction; and thus it was to be afterwards (they are his express words) *with the consent of the whole church.*†

THEY might ask the *advice* and assistance of the neighbouring churches and ministers; but the work in those early days of christianity was chiefly their own. And so it continued unto the days of *Cyprian*, ‡ who expressly, as the president of a synod, praises two churches who had deposed their respective bishops, *Martialis* and *Basilides*, and had chosen *Felix* and *Sabinus*, bishops in their room; telling them, “ They had not acted irregularly in what they had done; since as the people had the chief power of choosing worthy bishops, so also of refusing those that were
“ un-

* *Epist. ad Corinth.* † *Ibid.*

‡ Another eminent *Latin* Father who suffered martyrdom at Carthage in 258.

“ unworthy.”* And *Cyprian* acknowledges, that he was ordained “ by the suffrage of all the people.”†

MOREOVER, all ecclesiastical decisions, in those primitive churches, were done by *common consent*, all the people had a voice in what was done. *Clemens* therefore, gives his advice to the ringleaders of the disturbance at *Corinth*, that every one should subject himself unto the restored elder, and say, “ I will do the things appointed by the multitude.† This method continued in the churches for some time; for *Cyprian* says, “ That from the very first he was resolved he would do nothing without the knowledge and consent of his people.”§ And so we find that when persons, in the church he belonged to, had been guilty of a sinful conduct, he would not himself alone be judge of their crimes; but professes they ought to be tried by all the people;|| and says, that the persons who had offended should come and plead their cause before the elders, and before all the people.** When some had returned from sinful ways, wherein they had walked, and *Cyprian* was willing to receive them into fellowship; he complains in his letter to *Cornelius* of *Rome*, of the great unwillingness of his people to admit them: “ Oh, my dear brother, says he, if you could be present with us when those perverse men return from their schism, you would see what pains I take to persuade our brethren to be patient, and give their

* *Cyp. Epist.* lxxvii. Ed. Oxon. 1682. † *Populi universi suffragio.*
 ‡ *Ibid.* lv. § *Clen. Epist.* ut supra. § *Epist.* xiv. || *Ibid.* xxiv.
 ** *Ibid.* xvi.

“ their consent to the healing and receiving those
“ poor sick persons.” *

THUS we see, that when persons were received, the whole church admitted them; and when any persons were rejected, it was done by “ the divine suffrages of the people.” † All things were debated in common amongst them. ‡ And for church-worship and church acts, they always met in one place, which was frequently called the church’s house. §

It follows then, that those churches, where God in a special manner made his work successful, must be somewhat numerous; and two hundred years after Christ, in what province soever churches were gathered, they were called the churches in such a place. So *Irenæus* || says, the churches in *Germany*, the churches in *Spain*, in *France*, *Egypt*, &c. The churches, or congregations, were many, and the bishops were as many, for every particular church had its bishop, or pastor. Many of them might be small, and their outward appearance mean; but their *real glory* lay in this, that God in Christ was the glory in the midst of them. *Lydda*, *Jamnia* and *Joppa*, three episcopal towns, were within four miles one of another. In that age, bishops had their

* *Cypr. Epist.* lix. † *Secundum vestra divina suffragia, conjurati*
ibid. xliii. ‡ Ibid. xiv.

§ *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. 30. lib. ix. cap. 9. *De vit. Con.* lib. iii. cap. 36. The English word *Church*, as the Scotch *Kirk*, is probably derived from *Κύριος οίκος*, i. e. the Lord’s House, and formed by contraction.

|| A Greek Father who flourished about the year 184, and was put to death in the persecution under *Severus*, at *Lyons* in *France*.

their sees in poor villages.* We read in *Usher's* religion of the *Irish*, that even above five hundred years after Christ, there were in *Ireland* three hundred and sixty five churches, and so many bishops; but their revenues were so small, that some of those bishops had no more than the pasture of two milch beasts.†

To what has been mentioned we may add, that those primitive churches were co-ordinate, and not dependent some upon others, as to ecclesiastical power; and had mutual communion, by letters, or messengers, for each other's edification in love; each church, with its officers, acted as they thought most expedient, as those who were to give account only to the Lord.‡ The earliest piece of antiquity we have, is that excellent letter sent from the church sojourning at *Rome*, unto the church sojourning at *Corinth*, wherewith messengers§ were also sent. As their letters were sent by the universal consent of one church, so they were read to all the brethren of the other;|| and they had either their stated meetings, or occasional *synods* as they thought good, for each others assistance in difficult cases. But I have taken up too much of your time already.**

Syllo-

* *Hist. Holy War.* b. ii. chap. 2. † *Heylin's Cosmography.* p. 342.

‡ *Cypr. Epist.* lxxii.

§ *Claudius, Ephebus, Valerius, Bito (or Vito) and Fortunatus, Clem. Epist.* § 59. Ed. Cotler. 1700.

|| *Cypr. Epist.* lxi. & lix.

** Whoever would wish to see the above particulars treated more at large, may consult Lord *Kings*'s *Enquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, &c. of the Primitive Church.* An author not less remarkable for his impartiality and candour, than his ecclesiastical learning.

Syllogisticus. I am certain none of us think so, the little time you took you filled to good purpose; for you have left me nothing to do, but to observe, that the first churches, according to the account you both gave of them, are every way accommodated to answer the ends of a divine institution; that Christ alone, as lawgiver, and king of his church, may be exalted; his love, care, and pity represented; his authority maintained; our obedience and edification promoted. Now pray, *Theophilus*, what sort of churches were first gathered and planted in this land?

Theophilus. I dare venture to affirm, that the First Churches in *Britain* were strictly congregational; for the account our kind brethren gave of the apostolic and primitive churches, can agree with nothing else. What churches did the apostles and evangelists plant and water in *Judæa* and *Græce*? Churches of the same order most certainly they planted and watered in *Britain*. Congregational they were there; congregational they were here.

Christophilus. And here we may admire the tender compassion of our dear Redeemer towards his infant churches; and the amazing methods he had to screen and protect them. For though the nation in general was pagan, and the rulers were so; yet the repeated invasions of the *Romans*, the constant noise and din of war, battles and bloodshed, kept them so employed, that there was little or no time to persecute and torment the christians.* Had providence thought fit

* *DOROTHEUS* relates that *Simon Zelotes* was crucified and buried in *Britain*. Vide *Usser. Brit. Eccles. Antiq. cap. 1.*

fit to provide for us a history of those first congregational churches in *Britain*, or of any one of them, I should set a vast value upon it.

Philalethes. May we be helped to make the best improvement of what we have! But seeing we know those churches were *congregational*, may we not take an innocent liberty to form an *historick idea* of one of them, in a dialogistick method; and very consistent with truth, seeing no person is imposed upon to receive it as fact, but as a *delineation* of what might have been; and for the main, *must* have been?

I HOPE I am a sincere lover of *truth*, and shall receive it in whatever dress or form it comes; and Truth himself, who gave us the account of the prodigal son; his turns of life, his father, his brother, and the feast; and who gave us the account of the rich man and *Lazarus*; the rich man's requests, and *Abraham's* replies; will never condemn our design: And therefore, in the name of the company and myself, I earnestly desire you, *Epenetus*, our senior, and the first fruits of *Potheima*, to undertake this task.

Epenetus. You commit the work unto a person of a very poor invention; but seeing it is among my neighbours and friends, who are persons of capacity and candour, and from whom I may expect kind assistance whenever it may be thought needful, I shall not altogether decline what you are pleased to call me to.—But I shall not here consider what may be said concerning *Tnys Afalon*, afterwards called *Tnys Wydr*, where they say the Gospel was first preached in this land, and therefore called,

called, *the first land of God*; nor whether *Joseph of Arimathea*, really gathered a church there.—My principal acquaintance being with a city, called in that day, *Caerludd*; I take leave thus to suppose it.*

Two trading, well educated gentlemen of that city, in their travels, providentially heard the Gospel preached by one *Ffyddlon*, a faithful servant of the Lord. They went into the assembly smiling; but came out with tears in their eyes, afraid of one another, and endeavouring by many ways to hide their concern; for neither of them knew how it was with the other. They durst not speak a word about what they had heard,—but after unusual silence, one of them thought he must speak something,—but his words almost stifled him, and he hung down his head. The other, after some time, with much ado, asked the former, whether he was well? He just answered, see that we are alone, and the doors safe.

Christophilus. Oh! my dear *Epenetus*, you put me in mind of the first visits of God upon my spirit. I was a poor wretch, neither expecting nor desiring any acquaintance with grace or glory;—I went, without thought, nay worse, with madness in my heart against him who is now, I hope, precious to me; and I was surprised in such a manner as you have said. But I have interrupted you.

Epenetus. Upon this one of them, whose name was *Tefan*, said, Oh! my friend, how it is with you I cannot tell; I am under such a concern of mind as
I never

* Now the Narrative begins, and when read in families, &c. this Dialogue may be commodiously divided here,

I never felt; nor do I know whether any body else did ever feel such astonishing horror.—I did hear of this sect, and despised them as ignorant vain babblers.—I was resolved never to be shaken in mind.—I went to the place armed with those resolutions; but there was something which was *irresistible* entered my heart, when the preacher said, that “all the world was become guilty before God.” There was something like a Court called in my Conscience;—I was, by some power more than human, there indicted, proved guilty, and condemned;—and now I lie in chains.—I am ruined;—I am undone;—the burden I cannot bear,—and I now plainly see there is no *creature* can help me.

THE other, whose name was *Dewi*, with tears heard him, and after some time made answer; Oh! what a journey is this!—What will be the end of it!—I went along with you into the assembly under the same resolutions;—bent not so much as to consider any thing I should hear, unless something to make sport of;—but my sport is at an end for ever!—I am slain,—I am slain!—Many things delivered, so fastened upon me, that all the powers of nature can never shake them off.—The sinful *actions* of my life were laid in order before me;—and I could not help assenting to what I never heard before,—that all those sinful actions proceeded from a corrupt *fountain*;—a nature universally depraved.—And when the preacher said, “No man can redeem his brother, nor give unto God a ransom for him,” it entered my soul;—I lie under wounds, which no human hand can heal.—We have heard we must be judged, and we have heard

heard the judge is of "purer eyes than to look upon iniquity." Well may we bemoan ourselves! — All this while they sighed as if their loins would break, and their eyes were like fountains. The more they looked at each other, the more they were affected, each with his own wretched state; and with the deplorable condition of his friend. Of the business they came upon from home, they now could take no thought.

Theophilus. Oh! poor hearts, they wanted an *interpreter*, one among a thousand, that might speak a word in *season* to their burdened souls. But here they were alone, having nothing to point each other to but their wounds and misery; imprisoned and fettered in their souls, and could not come forth. But our God being full of compassion, I hope did seasonably come and command liberty to those captives, and the opening of the prison doors to those who were so bound, and give beauty for ashes.

Epenetus. You shall hear: All that night they had no rest, but *death, judgment*, and eternal destruction was all they could hear; and a terrible sound it was. It was a *night* indeed unto them; but as it is said in the word, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," so in some measure it was with them, for about break of day,

Dewi said, Do you not remember that the preacher said, "That God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved?"

Yefan.

Yefan. I believe I do; and another word: "there is Salvation in no other."—Now, my poor *Dewi*, who knows what may be in such words! It is plain we are undone;—but these words speak of Salvation:—And though it is in no other but in Him, whom we have so despised; who knows but he will save such wretches as you and I, seeing he saves sinners!—And with that they lifted up their voices and wept, — and could speak no more for some time. — Then said

Dewi. What must we do to be saved!—I could freely die the most cruel death;—or I could give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul: Such sacrifices our *Druids* recommend: But, alas! the great God requireth and accepteth no such sacrifices. For my part, I know not what to do!

Yefan. My friend, and brother in distress, there are two things come into my mind, as the properest steps we can take: Seeing *that* God before whom we tremble, is infinitely great, he must be infinitely good, — let us try to pray to him;—and then let us seek out that Servant of his that preached, and tell him our case, and beg his advice.

Dewi. I like what you say; but I don't know how to pray to God, "whose terror makes me afraid;" and as to the Man, my heart sinks within me, at the very thoughts of seeing him; and if he should speak roughly to us, I am slain.

Yefan. But, as I said before, there are some things that encourage me;—he that is infinitely great, I think, must be infinitely gracious. —He might have destroyed us long ago;—and *now* he does not strike us dead;—I think there is grace in

in this.—And as to the man, the servant of this most high God; he is merciful and compassionate: He is one of the children of men, and must know what it is to be under guilt, and can therefore fellow-feel with us, and perhaps may tell us after what manner he was relieved.

Devi. I think what you say is rational enough, but I am in a worse condition than you apprehend; do as you think fit, let me but be with you.

UPON this they threw themselves prostrate on the ground, sighing with their mouth in the dust:—At last *Yefan* said, “O Lord God, the maker of
“all things, and the governor of the world,—
“unto thee all power must belong.—We are two
“heathen men,—ruined and undone.—We de-
“serve death and destruction,—and ’tis owing
“only to thy sparing hand, that we are alive.—
“Thou canst in a moment crush us to death,—
“or bring glory to thyself, in the salvation of
“such wretches as we are.—We understand that
“heathen men, like ourselves, have been saved;—
“for the sake of all thy goodness, and all that
“whereby thou makest it known, turn us, and save
“us. *Amen.*” They still lay on the ground,—
crying and bemoaning themselves;—but after a
while they got up,—called for some water,—
drank a little,—and washed,—and went in search
of the preacher.

Philalethes. Their prayer makes me think of *David*’s
under oppressing grief. “The sorrows of death
“compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold
“upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then
“called

“ called I upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I
“ beseech thee, deliver my soul.” *Pf. cxvi. 3, 4.*

Christophilus. Oh, my dear *Philalethes*, what made you interrupt? I think every minute an hour till I hear how they were received, and whether Christ was made precious to them? But while I blame you for interrupting, I do but hinder the story myself.

Epenetus. I told you they went in search of the preacher, and upon enquiry, found out the house where he sojourned; but when they knocked at the door, they knocked like persons afraid to be heard. The person who opened the door, asked what their business was? They asked him whether the preacher of Christianity lived there, and whether he was at home? He answered, he was not at home; upon which they withdrew, and he shut the door. Their legs could hardly carry them,—they stood in the street looking at one another, trembling and amazed. At last says

Demetrius. What a disappointment is this! Our case seems darker and darker:—It looks as if we were to be shut up in darkness and distress for ever.

Nesani. The disappointment is great; but still who knows:—let us go back again, and ask when he is expected to be at home; for *that* we forgot. So they returned to the door, and again knocked;—but the person observing them talking earnestly in the street, and not knowing what they said, was ready to think they were not on a good design, and so was very backward to open the door. But says *Nesani*, Pray, when will the Gentleman be at home? Says he, from within, Pray, Gentlemen, what may be your business with him?—They replied, with

with a submissive voice, Pray be so kind as to open the door and we will tell you. — The door being opened, poor *Dewi*, with tears in his eyes, says to him, Pray, Sir, will you give us leave to come within your threshold? — This being granted, they entered. Then says *Dewi*, with a countenance discovering the greatest concern — and tears on his cheeks overtaking one another — Sir, are you a *Christian*? — He replied, yes; — and, said he, you make me take the freedom to ask you, what you are? Says *Dewi*, The Lord knows; — and could say no more. — Upon this,

Tefan said, We were born at *Caerludd*, and brought up there in the religion of our ancestors; and as we see now, have hitherto lived in ignorance and infidelity; but hearing the preacher of christianity yesterday, have been under unspeakable trouble of mind ever since; and our present disappointment adds to our distress.

Tostyriol, for that was the man's name, replied, I pity you both, and cannot at present put you in a better way, than to go and hear him preach to-day, at a neighbouring village; and I will go along with you. Take a refreshing morsel of what is plain and wholesome, for if I mistake not you stand in need of it. They thanked him, — accepted his kindness, — took a little — and presently set out.

As they went along, *Tostyriol* would be dropping something that concerned the kingdom of heaven; the misery of mankind by nature, the glory of Christ as a Saviour, the work of the holy Spirit, and the wonders of God's providence in sending the gospel to poor sinners, or bringing them to it without their
C design.

design. Unto this, and much more to the same purpose, they gave due attention, but said little: Nevertheless there was nothing that befell them but turned out to their advantage: Now they were under tuition in God's school for the special service of his kingdom.

BEFORE they came to the christian assembly the worship was begun; and as they entered, the preacher, *Ffyddlon*, was reading his text,* which was in *Isaiah* xi. 10. *To it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious.* He knew nothing of them,—and that was a comfortable consideration to them afterwards.

He observed, That the *Gentiles* were the poor Heathens, and among others, the *Britons*; also, that their Natural state was deplorable, under the dominion of sin, like the troubled sea that could not rest; where, with special application, he insisted on the Wretchedness of man by nature: He observed that *Jesus Christ* was the blessed Ensign set up for the people,—proved it,—and insisted much on his suitability to save, and the completeness of his Salvation: He observed the efficacy of grace in quickening and drawing the sinner, upon which the Heathen should seek to him; and then remarked how they should be graciously received, and should not miss of present rest in faith;—Faith, that should infallibly reach to glory. He was a long while in his sermon; but had he continued his speech till midnight, they would not have been in the young man's case, who fell down from the third loft.

WHEN their tears intermitted, they could not forbear fixing their eyes on him, as if their whole life

* In those days, sometimes a text was read, but not always.

life was in every word he said, but at times they were so affected, that they hung down their heads — and wished they could have concealed themselves, though within the hearing of his voice. As for *Tostyriol*, who brought them thither, it was a feast to him to see them so deeply impressed; and he blamed himself much that he had asked them with a sort of a frown at home, what their business was with the preacher?

WHEN worship was over, and the people dismissed, they went to the preacher, and signified to him their unfeigned respects; and knowing him to be much spent in his work, only desired leave to wait upon him the next morning at his lodgings: He, in the most affectionate manner, told them, he should be very glad to see them. They then departed, went to their Inn, ordered something for supper, and while it was preparing (being much fatigued) they drank a small draught of *Meth-y-glyn*, for their immediate refreshment.

BEING called to supper, and come to the table, the *Landlord*, who at that time was to sup with them, with hands and eyes lifted up to Heaven, implored the divine blessing upon the food providence had prepared for them; and desired they might be enabled to make the best use of all refreshments, in the service and to the glory of God, through Christ. The strangers being desired to help themselves, — the landlord, whose name was *Buddiol*, a very useful man, said, How bountiful is our God! how he supplies us with mercies, together with health and appetites to partake of them! Before these fowls were yet chickens, they were designed for our re-

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refreshment,

freshment; and every grain, which in their thoughtless rambles they picked up, did grow for us. — This bread may be traced to first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, which grew and ripened under the kind influences of heaven, and was reaped, gathered and ground for our use. This *Meth-y-glyn*, who can tell how many servants our provident God employed, in order to bring it to our table! how many bees! with what industry did they work! into what fields were their flights, where the mellifluous flowers grew for us! with what art, the honey gathered and preserved! and all for us. Our God commands seas, rivers and fields to serve us.* How does it become us to be thankful! But, continued he, though all this be wonderful, what is it to Redemption! whereby a poor sinner is delivered from the wrath to come! His Sins fully, freely, and for ever pardoned; his Soul converted by grace; brought to believe on the Son of God; and blessed with the Bread of Life, the hidden Manna! Enemies reconciled! Strangers brought near! Sinners saved! Oh, amazing Grace!

Theophilus. Oh, *Epenetus*, what a supper was this! which refreshes one, even at this distance of time! and what a landlord was he! I wish we had at least one such in every market town. But who can tell how it will be when the knowledge and glory of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the seas? But I want to know how it was with the two gentlemen.

Epenetus,

* His own words were; "O for, ac o fynydd, ac o lil o afo-nydd, y denfydd Duw, dda I ddedwydd."

Epenetus. While he was discoursing of providence their eyes were so fixed on him, that they could hardly regard their meat, only catch up a bit and look; — but when he came to speak of Redemption through Christ, they could look up no more: — Oh! they were melted, and hung down their heads; — which when he observed, he thought it prudent to *desist*, that the gentlemen might refresh themselves. — Supper being ended, he solemnly returned thanks; and desired the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit, that under his sin-subduing, soul-sanctifying operations, they might serve the living God faithfully, in the best use of all through Christ.

AFTER supper, he said unto them, Gentlemen, I am a Christian, and as such would desire to honour God, as the God of the families of his people, by worshipping him with my family. I can command them; but gentlemen *strangers* I never press, and you are welcome either to join with us, or to withdraw to your room. They said, if he pleased, they chose to stay. The 31st chapter of *Jeremiah* was read; the first the two strangers ever heard; and every part of it seemed to them filled with glory and power more than human. The master of the family spoke briefly to the contents of the chapter; and, when they had sung the 87th *Psalms*, he prayed in a judicious affectionate manner; and particularly for the *strangers*, that God would make a precious discovery of the glory of his Son to them, and bless them with strong *faith*, fervent *prayer*, and evangelical *holiness*.

BED-TIME being come, they heartily thanked their landlord for his prayers for them, and wished him

and the family a good night; and the young man who read the Chapter, shewed them their room; who at parting with them said, Gentlemen, "Mercy and truth be with you;" and so withdrew. But one of them said, Pray young man, what do you mean by Mercy and Truth? He answered, "the Mercy to *Abraham*, and the Truth to *Jacob*, which God sware unto our Fathers from the days of old." Then we suppose, said one of them, if they were your *Fathers*, that you are by birth and nation a *Jew*. He answered, No, Gentlemen, my ancestors were *Britons*, and I was born one; but through Grace I am born again, and now believe in *Christ*, and therefore am *Abraham's* Seed, and an Heir according to the Promise. Then said they, Young man, we wish you a good night.

Christophilus. Well, sure, such a day they never met with in their lives. What means of instruction did our dear Redeemer find out for them! what treasures of grace belong to him! Now I want to know how it was with them, when left by themselves.

Epenetus. For a while they sat astonished, under the weight of crowding thoughts: — at last says

Yefan. What an amazing day has this been! *Disappointments* all the day! disappointed in seeking the preacher; disappointed in the unexpected kindness of the man of the house; and when the preacher discoursed of the sinfulness and misery of man, my wounds were searched, I groaned under my misery, and expected no comfort, but was mercifully disappointed. In an Inn I expected no religion, but you see how in this also we are disappointed.

Drawi.

Dewi. Every thing in this journey is Wonderful. When we left *Caerludd*, we did not intend to go any further than *Caerbadon*, then curiosity led us as far as *Caeroder*, and determined thence to visit *Pencaer*, *Caer-Gwent* and *Clawddhanton*, and so return. But this resolution being over-ruled, we took the *Caerlow* road; and calling at this Village (which from henceforth we may for ever call *Hyfrydle*) without any design to stay, heard of a meeting of *Christians*, and had the curiosity to go to it; and blessed be God, my dear *Yefan*, blessed be God that ever we did. As you said, disappointments we have had, but all I hope for the best. — Our landlord told us of the wonders of providence at supper, and we may indeed say, the wonders of providence! — When the preacher represented Christ as a suitable Saviour to the chief of sinners, and said that he came to seek and to save that which was lost, it went to my very heart: I thought it would have sunk within me under the weight of a comfortable hope that he would save me. It made me willing to die, that I might go to him that loved poor sinners, and died for them.

Yefan. For my part, if I had spoken to the preacher before hand, and told him my case, I should have thought he spoke to me on purpose, for every thing was so applicable; but this he could not know; so I hope what he said was provided for us by the gracious Lord, who knew our wants, and therefore guided his servant to those things which suited us. And now my dear *Dewi*, do you pray to God and we will go to bed.

UPON this they both, as in the morning, worshipped the most high God; thanked him for the mercies of the day, and committed themselves unto him for the night; not forgetting now their poor families at home: — And all with many tears.

MORNING being come, they got up, worshipped God, both of them prayed, committed themselves to the Lord, and begged that day might be a special blessing to them. After having some spiritual discourse, they hastened to visit *Ffyddlon* the preacher, asking the Landlord to go with them; which he said he would readily do; only he desired to worship God with his family first, for, said he, we may be detained to an inconvenient time.

THE family was called, the 68th *Psalms* read, whereupon the master of the family observed in particular, the *ascension* of Christ, and *his receiving gifts for the rebellious, that God might dwell among them*; and then in a solemn manner prayed, and particularly that their visit to the servant of God might be attended with a special blessing.

WORSHIP being over, they went; and quickly came to *Tostyrial's* house, where *Ffyddlon* the bishop sojourned, and found him ready expecting them. After civil salutations, and seating themselves, *Buddiol* the landlord said to his bishop, Sir, these gentlemen seem to be under some discouraging thoughts, and being backward to speak I take this freedom. — I hope they are lovers of *Christianity*; — they are come to converse with you on the great and weighty concerns of religion.

Ffyddlon. Gentlemen, you are heartily welcome; I look upon it as the business of my life to serve the
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the Lord *Christ* and my poor fellow sinners. But that it may be a sanctified opportunity to us, let us seek the face of God in prayer. Accordingly he prayed, and desired the eternal Spirit, who leads into all truth, would graciously guide thoughts and words to his glory, the instruction and edification of all present; and particularly that the strangers, providence had brought there, might have all their wants supplied, and they made a blessing to their last moments, and then received to glory. When prayer was over, he said, now gentlemen speak on.

Yefan. Sir, being on our journey, we called at this village, and put up at a house we shall never forget;—and hearing of a meeting of Christians, our curiosity led us to go to it. We heeded no man, nor had any thought of God. But—I tremble to relate it—a power more than natural, seized us;—our sins were set in order before us; and we saw ourselves lost and undone; but heard of a Saviour for the worst of sinners. — And upon this, for weeping, could say no more. — But *Deawi* took it up, and went through most part of the story related; and then broke off, desiring his judgment on their case, and his best advice.

Ffyddlon. You have given me some account of the work of God upon your souls; observe me, I call it *the work of God*, and that you may compare spiritual things with spiritual, I will give you a short account of his work upon me. I was born and bred a heathen; and as I grew up, given to most of the vices of the neighbourhood where I lived, which was at *Tref-anrhaith*. But as vice grew upon me, so checks of conscience did, that much marred

my comfort. I endeavoured to stifle those dark apprehensions that spoiled my pleasure, and used all the arts I was master of for that purpose, but never could thoroughly effect it. I found that, though I had not the written law, I was in a sense a law to myself; my conscience accusing or excusing. — I took great delight in shooting, was glad to be esteemed a dexterous archer, and could draw a bow, or take aim as I thought with any man: And one time pursuing my game at *Coed Mawr*, I saw a knot of people by the wood side, as in a ring, and one man advanced a little higher than the rest, and seemed to be speaking to the company. I drew near and found I was not deceived, for speaking he was with great affection and earnestness; the people many of them in tears, and joy sat upon the countenances of others. I gave no attention to what was delivered, but wondered to see the people so taken with it. Anon, says the preacher, *Joseph*, (now among the blessed) That man, — pointing to me, may think there is none here armed but himself; let him know that there is: The glorious Redeemer whom I preach, is in the midst of us, and is armed both with justice and mercy: And with that cried out with a loud voice, “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most Mighty, and in thy majesty ride prosperously, upon the word of truth, meekness and righteousness. — Thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the king’s enemies.” — Upon this he considered who the enemies were, and what was their case; I quickly found myself among them, and as a wretched, lost, undone creature, I felt the arrows in my heart. Every word he spoke pointed me out to be the man
that

that must for ever lie under the avenging strokes of justice: His words were like a two edged sword; I trembled—I hung down my head,—but go away I durst not;—but being wounded in soul, and dispirited, I dropped my bow and arrows to the ground, and never took them up.—After some time he came to Mercy, and insisted on the word Meekness, and the word Truth: I saw indeed that what he spoke then, was exceedingly *suitable* to a poor wretched sinner, such as I was; but all I attained to then, was a *Desire* to receive such tidings of grace. The people I judged happy, and wished myself among them; but yet concluded myself miserable.

THE meeting being ended, several of the people accompanied the preacher. There was but one of them that I knew, whose name was *Cywir*; he came and took notice of me, and desired I would go with him that night. I accepted of his invitation and went.—There was in his neighbourhood that evening, a private meeting of a few christians for prayer and conference; to this we went together. Here, after prayer, one of them asked me, whether I was a *Christian*, and how it was with me in my *Soul*? His words did half *slay* me; they entered my very heart;—I trembled, and said, I know not what;—nor could any body understand me. My acquaintance *Cywir* pitied me, as they all did, but said no more, only spoke their experiences in my hearing, and prayed for me. The fright upon my wounded heart, put me into such a condition, that I could hardly attend to what they said: But they behaved kindly to me, and at parting one of them, with tears in his eyes, said, “The Saviour of sinners have

“mercy on thee, and reveal himself to thee.” But my load was great.

THAT night my friend *Cywir* took a great deal of pains with me; sometimes instructing me in the principles of christianity, sometimes reading to me the word of God; sometimes telling me his own experience, and sometimes praying with me. I always pointed him to my sins, my wounds and bruises, and he pointed me to the wounds of Christ, and the blood of the everlasting covenant. Next day *Joseph* preached in another place, and *Cywir* went with me there: *Joseph* took for his text, *Isaiah* xliiii. 24, 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* He opened all my disease, and proclaimed the glorious Physician who heals for his own name's sake. Unto him as a perishing sinner I came, and still come; for *Christ* hath said it, “Him that cometh.” “I will in no wise cast out.”

Nefan. Sir, I am very thankful for this precious account; and I humbly think, upon the comparison, there is something of the same kind in my own experience. Though I would not build my hopes on the resemblance, but on the *Saviour* who said, “Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.”

Derwi. And I, Sir, return you many thanks also, and wish I could be as full of encouragement as my friend *Nefan* is; but I think there is such a dissimilitude between your account and what I feel, that makes me dissatisfied with myself; for you were the very next day helped to receive Christ, and to know that he received you; but I am not yet assured of it.

Ffyddlon,

Ffyddlon. Our hope, as your friend hinted, is not to be built upon a resemblance between one work of grace and another; for if so, it being attended with such a variety of different circumstances, in those who are yet real Christians, there would be very little hope found any where. The truth of the work lies in a turn of heart from self to Christ. Whoever is brought to see himself lost and undone by sin, to see that his own righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and desires to be found in Christ and his righteousness, is a converted man, a believer in the Lord, whether he be fully satisfied concerning his own faith or not: and then, in the darkest times I would not forget, nor would I have any other christian forget, the mentioned words of our dear Saviour, "Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out." Faith is the same for kind in all converted, but as to the means and manner of God's working faith, there is a great *variety*. Your Landlord is now called away, but when convenient, desire him to relate his experience.

To make short, the good servant of Christ kept them with him all that day, instructed them in the principles of religion; and, being men of good natural parts, some degree of learning; and now men of grace, they quickly took in the principal doctrines of christianity; and after prayers and tears for them, he asked them, before many witnesses, who hearing of that day's work, begged to be present, whether they did believe the truth of the christian religion, and renounce whatever was inconsistent therewith? They answered, they did. He asked them, did they venture their souls upon Christ for salvation?

tion; yielding themselves and their all, unto him, taking his yoke upon them, and resolving in his strength to obey and serve him for ever? They answered, they did. Upon which he said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?" He ordered it, and they were baptized on the spot,* and with fervent prayers and praises committed them to God and the word of his grace.

BEING returned to their Inn, their Landlord saluted them with, *Gentlemen*, how do you do? They answered, we hope well; and then admired the wonders of providence in bringing them thither, and the wonders of grace in working on their souls! Oh, says he, *Gentlemen*, God's ways are in the deep, but they are all Mercy and Truth. This last word brought the young man to their mind, who lighted them to bed the night before; and said they, Pray, Sir, how is it with your *Chamberlain*? He dropped a word, which not many days ago, we should have taken for a certain mark of *distraction*: He said, that through Grace he was born again: Pray what did he mean by it?

GENTLEMEN, says the landlord, though you are not acquainted with the term, it is a mystery which, through Grace, you also understand; and upon this he calls *Alfred*, for that was his name, and says to him, Pray tell these gentlemen what you meant by being born again by Grace.

Alfred. I was born a heathen, and cannot say that I was brought up in any thing, but left to myself;

* Mr. Morrice considers Baptism as an ordinance appertaining to Christianity, but not strictly a Church ordinance; which he infers from the examples of the *Eunuch*, the *Jailer* and others.

myself, and proved a poor, idle, strolling boy; but coming to this door, to ask for something to satisfy hunger, my dear master, (for whom I shall ever bless God) called me in, and told me I was in the high way to eternal destruction; that it would be better for me to be fixed in some sober family, and stick to some honest business. Said I, Sir, I fear no body will take me. Will you tarry with me, says he, and be faithful? I said I would. — But oh, the pains he took with me! he taught me to read; he was night and day instructing me; he told me how I was born in sin, and under the curse, and that I had by my repeated sins, added much to my guilt. He told me that *Jesus Christ* was the only Sacrifice for sin, the only Saviour of sinners; and that he was exceeding precious: He told me it was the work of the Holy Spirit to create a new heart, convert the soul and sanctify it; always would be speaking to me of Christ's love and grace, and praying for me, and putting me upon praying alone, and telling me what great reason I had to bemoan myself. And, that I be not tedious, my poor soul was struck with convictions quickly, sometimes under great concern, at other times at ease, then under horror, because I was so thoughtless and easy: Then a word my master often repeated to me, would ring in my soul, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven:" Then under amazing horror; for thought I, what can I do towards such a work as that! — But one time as I was in our barn, under great concern, pouring out my soul before God, I felt that word, with precious power, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." I found

my

my soul melted down; I was willing to receive, and be saved by Christ; and with that, "Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out," encouraged my soul. This I meant by being born again.

Yefan. Young man, we thank you, and now return what you wished might attend us, *mercy and truth be with you.*

WELL, what amazing methods God takes to bring his own to himself, and under what variety of circumstances! But since the work is but effected, blessed be God for it. — The preacher, Landlord, desired we would ask you how you were called by Grace?

Landlord. Gentlemen, said he, you see I am not an old man, I was born of christian parents, who were both converted in hearing the blessed *Simon Zelotes* preach, not long before he suffered martyrdom for Christ. Ever since I remember, my father and mother would be instilling something about my sinful nature, and Christ's love in dying for sinners. And some concern about these things grew up with me. As to my morals, there was always a restraint upon me, but under all I found the workings of corruption, and saw that had I been left to myself, I should have been vile as the vilest. Many scriptures were made useful, to shew me my pollution by nature, that I was born in sin, that in my flesh dwelleth no good thing; to convince me that God is just, that Christ fulfilled all righteousness, and that there is salvation in no other; the necessity of a real change of nature or no going to glory. I find, through Grace, I hate sin, I loath myself, I would have no righteousness to appear in before God but *Christ's*. I venture all upon him, I love him, I love his service. His love constrains

constrains me. I hope I shall, in this spirit, worship him as long as I live, and wait for his glory.

At supper they had pleasant talk, and after family worship, wished each other good repose. *Dewi* and *Lefan*, in their own room, blessed God for the day, committed themselves and theirs to his grace, and morning being come, they arose and worshipped and prepared themselves for their journey. They went to take their leave of the bishop *Ffyddlon*; who gave them several books of the old and new Testament of his own translation into the *British* tongue; and also a system of divinity of his own drawing up, together with his *experience* at large; accompanied them to the Inn, worshipped God with them there, told them their hands were on the plough, and encouraged them to go on in the strength of the Lord. They made him becoming returns of gratitude, and earnestly desired him to come and visit them as soon as possible, and told him where he might find them. Said he, if the Lord will, I hope in less than two months to see you. And so with many tears, and the most tender embraces, they parted, begging of each other a constant remembrance before the throne of grace.

Theophilus. Oh, *Epenetus*, how I long to hear this story out! How was it with them on the way? How were they received at home? What success attended them?

Epenetus. I have been longer upon this story because of the great use God made of the men afterwards. Being mounted, they turn their faces towards *Caerludd*, as new men; having new fears, new joys, new designs, are seemingly in a new world, all things are become new. And though but earthen vessels, God had now
put

put a treasure into them more valuable than the universe. And so homeward they move. Their wives and families, Oh, their wives and families now lie near them. Their relations, friends and acquaintances they have now a thousand thoughts about. After one day's journey they blamed themselves much they did not urge the preacher to go home with them, thinking it might be of immediate use to their nearest ones at home. They talked of returning for him, but seeing he had promised a visit in a short time, they thought they would wait for it, and in the mean time do what they could for Christ.—But I see time will fail us, else I thought to have told you their struggles for Christ in their families, and among their acquaintance; and how God blessed their endeavours for the conversion of many; so that when *Efyddlon* came to see them, he found so many living stones, fit for the spiritual building, that he immediately put them upon entering into church fellowship together, which for matter and form, officers and order, I should also relate; but I think for the present I have sufficiently tired you.

Christophilus. Oh, my dear *Epenetus*, I could hear it till midnight; but as time is elapsed and other duties call, we heartily thank you for what you have gone through; and hope the next time to be here a little sooner to hear the story out. Brethren and neighbours the best of blessings attend you. And with such valedictions they parted.

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE II.

Dewi and Yefan at an Inn, aim at the conversion of the Landlord, who obstinately despises Christianity. They are greatly grieved, but in the morning are surprised with a good work upon Edgar; who goes with them, and that day meets his brother Cradog become a Christian. They all arrive at Caerludd. Dewi's wife and servants immediately converted. Yefan's great trial in his wife. His great endeavours. The wonderful success at a publick meeting appointed for disputation. Ffyddlon the bishop comes to Caerludd: Baptizes many: Puts them on Church Fellowship. Stays with them to preach for some time.

CHRISTOPHILUS.

PROVIDENCE favouring us with another opportunity, our beloved *Epenetus*, we beg you would proceed in your story. You left the two gentlemen, and a great deal of our expectation, on the road; now I hope you will carry them and us forward to *Caerludd*.

Epenetus. I told you how they blamed themselves they did not take *Ffyddlon* along with them, but seeing he had promised them a visit, they would wait, and do what they could for Christ in the mean time. Their hearts were filled with love to Christ, and pity to their fellow sinners, whom they were eager to serve. Therefore that night on the road,

road, they desired their Landlord would sup with them, that they might have an opportunity of taking some work in hand for their Lord.—*Yefan* stood up, and, in a very solemn manner, gave the eternal God thanks for his amazing mercies to them on their journey, leading them to look to Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls, bringing them in safety so far, providing food for the refreshment of their bodies, and earnestly begged the blessing of heaven upon their provision; that the Spirit of the Lord would bless their conversation, and enable them chearfully and faithfully to serve their dear Redeemer.—Having helped themselves, they discoursed of the bounty of providence, and the wonders of redemption; and asked their landlord what thoughts he had of religion, and how he relished the things they discoursed of?

GENTLEMEN, says the Landlord, whose name was *Bydol*, I never trouble my mind about religion. As for the things you have been discoursing of, I do not understand them, and hope to be happy without them. I find you are of that new sect, which is every where spoken against. But, nevertheless, Gentlemen, you are welcome to me; you know I am a landlord, and you know I should carry it handsomely to all.

Dewi. With all my heart I pity your case. I was not long since as regardless of religion as you can be; but when God was pleased to convince me of his greatness, and my wretchedness, I was made to conclude that Religion should be the greatest concern of my life, and that without it I could not enjoy true pleasure here, nor felicity hereafter. It is out of pity to your soul, and the souls of those
under

under your roof, that we took up this discourse, hoping some word might be blessed for your eternal advantage. It would profit you nothing, if you could gain all *Britain*, and lose your own soul. And I earnestly beg you to consider that you are a sinner, and that no sacrifices or oblations, of an earthly kind, can possibly satisfy the eternal God, for the sin of man.

Bydol. Gentlemen, good nature commands me to be thankful, for the pity you express; but I am not in such a case as you imagine; am sorry you give yourselves needless trouble, and assure you, that your silence, concerning such affairs, will greatly oblige your humble servant. And so he withdrew.

Theophilus. Poor hearts! at the very entrance of their work, to be so repulsed! how discouraging must it be to them. They aimed at his heart, and he turned away his ear. Though his business obliged him to be civil, his aversion to real goodness made him rude. Oh, the deep degeneracy of man!

Philaethes. Though this was unpleasant, it was instructing: They might here see, more than before, the enmity of the carnal mind, which at all adventures will oppose the chief good; and take the greater occasion to praise and adore distinguishing grace to their own souls. Perhaps this trial might be of great use afterwards: But I want to know how these poor young soldiers bore it?

Epenetus. They were struck dumb, — hung down their heads, quickly finished their supper, in a few words owned the goodness of God, the sinfulness of man, their own weakness and unworthiness, and desired God to have mercy on poor sinners, who
had

had destroyed themselves, and give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. And now they retired; having another unexpected event to converse upon; and the doors being shut, said

Dewi. Oh! *Yefan*, *Yefan*, what's this! Is it our duty to speak of our Lord's name to our poor fellow sinners? Why did he not own the attempt, who could have made it effectual? By what we have said the man seems hardened.

Yefan. I own 'tis very shocking; I did not expect it: But it is our place, who have found mercy, to recommend it to others in misery.—If they receive it, then a soul is saved from death; but if they reject it, they discover the depravity of degenerate nature; and we may learn, how amazing distinguishing grace, hath visited us.

Dewi. There is one thing that now fills me with dread; I have a wife at home I dearly love; I know her temper, her spirit is high, never conquered with any thing. I know there is salvation in none but Christ; and if I live, speak of *him* to her I must. Though I long to be at home, yet I dread it, lest all my poor endeavours for her good should meet with the most violent opposition; and the comfort of my life be gone.

Yefan. I pity your case; but I have *this* to comfort me; my wife is as kind a creature as lives; always studies to oblige me; is never provoked with any rough carriage of mine, but immediately wins my heart with smiles and kindness: Advises with me in whatever she undertakes, and what I think most proper, she always complies with: And as I think it my duty to spread salvation in Christ before
her,

her, I make no great doubt but she will chearfully receive the glad tidings of life, and immediately worship her Redeemer. I long to tell her all, that she and I may rejoice together in the Lord; and if your spouse should appear stubborn, I and mine will do all we can to assist you.

THEN they committed themselves and theirs to the God of all Grace, mourned over their non-success, and particularly requested that their nearest relations might quickly receive the Salvation of God: And so went to rest.

THEY got up very early the next morning, begged protection in their journey, that they might visit their habitations and not sin, and might be favoured with encouraging success. They presently got ready; and just as they were preparing for their departure, a young man of the family fell at their feet, and aloud cried out *Mercy*—and could say no more; but cried and sobbed, as if his heart would break, and with his hands had hold of *Dewi's* feet. Young man, says *Dewi*, what is the matter with you? What is the matter? After a little while he recovered himself, and lifting up one hand from the ground, said, Gentlemen, as ever you have obtained mercy, have mercy on me! They asked the landlord, who was there present, whether the young man was delirious? He answered, that he had been with him now several months, and he never observed any thing like it in him. Then, said *Nesam*, Young man, what would you have? What can we do for you? He answered, let me but go with you to the meanest service you can put me to: If I can but wash the feet of your servants, I shall think myself

myself happy. Said *Dewi*, with tears in his eyes, What makes you desire this of us? get up and speak.

Edgar, for that was his name, answered, Gentlemen, last night, while you were at supper, I stood behind a door at some distance from you, and being desirous to hear the converse of strangers, gave attention; and, while you, Sir, were discoursing of the sinful condition of the children of men, I found my heart sinking as guilty; but when you spoke of God as perfect; that he was a consuming fire, and of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity, something like an arrow entered into my heart, and there it remains; dear Sirs, I am ruined and undone; only you said there was a Saviour for sinners; which word has all this night filled me with the most earnest desires to know him, and be saved by him. I never had such a night in my life, of terrors and fears; but your word of a Saviour was some support to me, who can tell but he may be my Saviour?

Yefan. Pray, landlord, is he a relation of your's, or an hired servant?

Landlord. Neither, Sir, only some months ago he called here, and asked me to take him in, which I did; he is neither bound to me nor I to him, nor have I any demands upon him.

Yefan. Pray, young man, are your parents living? Who, and where are they?

Edgar. Sir, my father and mother bore arms under *Boadicea*, in her revenges upon the *Romans*; but when *Suetonius* defeated the *Britons*, my father and mother fell among the slain, and I a poor young boy was carried away among the captives, and made a present of to an officer of note named *Flavius*, in the second legion

legion *Augusta*, at *Caerusk*. I quickly learned the *Roman* tongue, and my master being a gentleman bred at *Athens*, and very kind to me, took great delight to instruct me in the *Greek* tongue, to which I am not altogether a stranger. But my master dying, I was turned up to my liberty, and not inclining to the field, and noise of arms, I wandered in pursuit of some honest rural employment; and have here served my master in what I was put to, now for some time. I am, dear gentlemen, a poor fatherless, motherless, friendless lad; but if I could hope the Saviour you spoke of would save me from my sins, and make me happy with his friendship, I should not be very anxious what circumstances of meanness and affliction I pass through in this world. Acquaintance with that Saviour I want; here is nobody knows him: You say he has graciously revealed himself to you; and therefore for his sake take me with you—For tears he could say no more.

AY, gentlemen, says the landlord with a sneer, you may take him. The gentlemen were both greatly affected; but did all they could to refrain from tears: At last says *Yefan*, We have never a horse for him to ride on: The youth hearing, said, Sir, trouble not yourself; with help from heaven and your leave I hope to be at *Caerludd* without a horse, perhaps as soon as you; only let me know where to find you. They informed him of that, and where they intended to bait that day; and put in his pocket what they thought necessary: And all set out.

Christophilus. Amazing wonders of grace! It may be well said of our Redeemer, that his ways are past finding out! What providential turns pass over

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this youth! The word must enter his heart that was aimed at the heart of another. What sovereign, gracious, infallible power, directed and applied it!

Theophilus. And I am thinking how encouraging this must be to the two gentlemen, who were so dejected the night before; who thought all their labour was in vain: Now God gave them an early token that his word shall not return void, but prosper according to his purpose who sent it.

Philalethes. And very instructing unto them for the future, how to work for God, and leave the increase to him.—Let them blow the trumpet, and God will gather his people. But we have interrupted the story.

Epenetus. I told you they set out, and I must now say, rejoicing; for they thought this was an earnest to them of greater service, and a first fruit of a desirable harvest. The work of God was warm upon their hearts, and their lips did shew forth his praise. When they came to the place where they designed to refresh themselves, they saw *Edgar* was got in before them, who with all the thankfulness a countenance could discover, or a heart contain, waited upon them; they ordered him into the dining-room, and while their dinner was preparing,

Yefan said, O *Edgar*! What amazing Grace has followed you in providences past; and especially now in discovering to you your condition by sin, and putting you upon inquiries after a Saviour.—Know then that he is the Son of God, and yet born of a woman; two distinct natures in one person. According to his *divine* nature he is the Eternal God; according to his *human* nature, born of the *Virgin Mary*.

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He was cut off, but not for himself; he underwent the strokes of God's Justice, that his blood might wash away the sins of his people, and that his obedience unto death might be reckoned to them for righteousness: He was delivered for their offences, and rose from the dead for their justification: He ascended up to heaven in the sight of his disciples; is at the right hand of God; makes intercession for the transgressors; is able to save to the uttermost; encourages the vilest of sinners to venture their salvation upon him, and says, "Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out;" Oh! *Edgar*, this is our beloved, this is our friend.

Edgar. Then, come life or death, he shall be my beloved, and my friend; I venture my perishing soul upon him alone, and desire I may trust him with all my salvation. Blessed be God for the Saviour, and blessed be God for you both; and I must add, blessed be God who made your words reach my heart. For had it not been for his effectual Grace, I had been like my master, and the rest of the family. With many tears these things were spoken and heard. But dinner comes; —they owned the goodness of God, and begged his blessing on their food; refreshed themselves, and returned thanks; sat a while after dinner, and *Edgar*, having had no rest the night before, and having walked pretty many miles, fell asleep.

In the mean time comes a young man to their door, and humbly spoke to them as follows: Gentlemen, excuse me, I am a young man willing to work, but am out of business at present, and make bold to offer my service. They asked him what ser-

vice he was capable of? He answered, according to my strength, any thing of husbandry. They said, they were citizens, and had no concern that way. But how came you to be out of service? It looks as if you were not a good servant, else surely you would not want a master.— He replied, that his master never laid negligence, or unfaithfulness to his charge; and yet there was *one* thing for which he would not keep him. This made the gentlemen very desirous to know what that was; and the youth's backwardness made them more eager: At last he said, my master was afraid I was a Christian. And are you then a Christian, said they? He answered, I am *afraid* I am not. They enquired, where his parents were? He said, they were slain in the wars: They asked again, whether he had brothers or sisters? He answered, he had only one brother, whom he believed was slain also: They asked him his name, and what was his brother's name? He replied, that his brother's name was *Edgar*, and that his own name was *Cradog*. They quickly awoke their young man, and asked him, Had you ever a brother? He answered that once he had one, whose name was *Cradog*, but he believed he was killed the same time as his parents were. Then said *Dewi*; Pray, young men, look at one another.

THEY immediately knew each other, they rejoiced, they embraced, they wept in each other's bosom: Upon which *Yefan* said, If natural affection is so powerful, what must the compassion and love of our Lord be, who is the first-born among many brethren! When they had refrained, and were with the greatest pleasure looking on each other, each *wishing* in his heart

heart the other was a Christian: At last, says *Dewi*, What a sight is here! Brethren met, and discovering the depth of fraternal love, and yet afraid they are not brethren! What do you mean, replied *Yefan*? They know not they are brethren in Christianity, says *Dewi*. Upon this new passions arose; tears of joy flowed, and the most tender embraces followed. What! my brother a Christian! one said, and the other said—The whole was affecting.—When this passion was also over, says *Cradog*, are these two gentlemen Christians? Yes, says *Edgar*, and the blessed means of my conversion to Christianity; and I am but new born. And we, says *Yefan*, are not much older; but pray, *Cradog*, tell us in a few words how the work of God began upon you.

Cradog. Gentlemen, it was by means of a fellow-servant of mine, who was a Christian. He began thus one day at plough, he holding and I driving. I was very merry, singing and whistling; says he to me, *Cradog*, you have no great cause to be so merry if you knew all. Why, said I, what have I done, that I should not be merry? Says he, What *good* thing have you done? and, if you knew yourself, what *evil* thing have you not done? therefore I say you are undone. Every word went to my soul;—I said nothing, but I had done singing for that day; he thought I was angry with him, and therefore towards evening said to me, that he would not have me be angry with him, for what he spoke was out of good will, and that he greatly desired my poor soul might be eternally happy. I told him I was not angry; but said, with many tears, that if my case was such as he said, I was undone. Then he told me there

was a Saviour, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, and that even those, who had destroyed themselves, should find help in him. I desired to know who he was? He told me it was Jesus Christ in whom he trusted, and whom he worshipped night and day. He prayed with me, and instructed me; and would be always speaking to me about Christ; the glory of his person, the wonders of his love, the efficacy of his grace, &c. though he said he knew but little. My master, upon observing how diligent he was to turn others to Christianity, turned him off; and, after some time, because I would not renounce Jesus Christ, turned me off also.

THE gentlemen heard him with a great deal of pleasure, and his brother with many tears; but says *Yefan*, Come let us go; for I long to be at home; and, young man, says he to *Cradog*, you may accompany your brother, and come both to my house, till we shall order your abode; which made the young men bow themselves to the earth, admire the merciful providence of God, and own they wanted words to express their thankfulness to both the gentlemen.

Christophilus. What surprising variety there is in the same work of Grace! But unto all that believe, Christ is precious. But now they are drawing towards home, I want to know how they were received, and especially how it fared with poor *Dewi*, who was not without dread about it.

Epenetus. They all got to town betimes; and at parting expressed a thousand wishes for each other's success in the great work of the Redeemer's Kingdom; and as for *Dewi*, he entered his house with
joy

joy and trembling, with heart, hands and eyes lifted up to heaven. His wife, in the most tender manner, welcomed him home; his servants made obeysance, and his little children, in a fond manner flocked to him: and after affecting tokens of love and tenderness to his wife and children, he with the greatest earnestness said, Send now prosperity, O Lord!

His wife, whose name was *Gweddus*, under some astonishment, cried out, My dear, what is the matter with you? are you not well, or have you not had a prosperous journey?

Dewi. My dear, I never had such a prosperous journey in my life; and I hope I can say, through Grace, I never was so well in my life: I went out rich, I come home poor; I went out poor, I come home very rich; I went out alive, I come home dead; I went out dead, and come home alive; and shall live for ever.

Gweddus. My dear, I am frightened; you are distracted; I am ruined, and your children too. Oh! let me know how it is.

Dewi. My dear, be not frightened, I have the free use of sense and reason, and expressed myself so, to prepare your attention to what I shall further say; wherein you shall find every part of what I said to be strictly true. I went out rich in my own esteem; but I met with *that* abroad which effectually convinced me, I never did one perfect good deed in my life, and so come home poor. I went from home really poor, and wretched and naked; and come home cloathed with the Righteousness of a glorious Redeemer, in whom all things are mine; for in him the eternal God is my portion. I went out alive, thinking myself entitled to life eternal; but that hope

is slain, and I am dead to that law: I went out dead in sins, but the eternal God has been pleased to quicken me, I have heard the voice of God, and shall live. And now, my dear, in the most fervent affection desiring you may partake of the same happiness, I will tell you how this was effected.

AND then he entered upon the story of his conversion at *Hyfrydle*, the anguish of mind he went through, &c. But long before he finished what he had to say, he saw how it was with his poor wife; first he saw her attention quickened, then cheeks glowing, and tears trickling; at last she cries out, And is their hope for such a one as I? Will that blessed Saviour save me? The servants also, who were present by their master's order, cried out, What shall *we* do to be saved? Great was their cry under distress, and many were his tears of joy. He spoke comfortably to them, and being now greatly encouraged, he said, Come let us worship the true God, in the glorious Redeemer; and thereupon he prayed, and the Spirit of God was greatly with him: And his wife and servants believed.

Gweddus. My dear, what wonderful Grace is this! blessed be God to all eternity, for this journey and the fruits of it. I here renounce all vain confidences, and betake myself to this precious Redeemer, and cast my poor, perishing soul upon him.

THEY rejoiced together in God; and when the table was spread for their refreshment, *Dewi*, in a very evangelical manner, blessed God, and implored his blessing on the food his providence had prepared. This also was a new thing to his wife and servants, but what they now thought exceeding agreeable. They
could

could hardly eat for joy: Christ was all the subject of their discourse; on him they fed; it was the kindness of their youth. After refreshment *Dewi* returned thanks, and then desired his wife, seeing it was not yet very late, to take a walk with him to see his dear friend *Yefan*: But while they were discoursing of this, who comes in but *Yefan*, with a countenance not very chearful: Says

Dewi. Brother, see what God has wrought! my wife and servants have received Christ, and we have been worshipping him together: I can never be thankful enough.—How is it at home with you?

Yefan. Ah, my dear friend, a new trial attends me, which I am afraid will be a trial to the end of my days. I found my wife through mercy well, and met with a joyful and kind reception. Whereupon with chearfulness I told her, that this was the best journey that ever I had in my life; for I had found a pearl of great price, more valuable than all the world; that I was made to believe on *Jesus Christ*, the Saviour of sinners. And are you then a Christian, said she? I answered that I was, by the Grace of God. Then she replied that all her comfort was forever at an end; and wished a thousand times I had never gone from home. Then, in the most tender manner, I prayed her to hear my experience of the work of God, how I was convinced of my wretched state, &c. With a countenance discovering the greatest indignation, she replied, “Not I. I’ll hear none of your cant; Oh, unhappy woman! Oh, poor unhappy children!” and upon that withdrew, and I suppose is shut up in her closet. I never did see any thing like this temper in her in my life: And as for the

two poor young men, they are come, and sit in our kitchen, tired, and seem much dejected at our present distraction. The Father of mercies have mercy on me and mine!—

Deavi. Come my dear *Yefan*, be not cast down; you know more of the things of God than I do; but I know that power and mercy belong to him: God has a mind to try your faith; he knew mine was too weak to bear a trial, therefore he favoured me wondrously; but I hope he hath as great things in reserve for you, and takes this way to make them the sweeter when they come. If you please we will send for the two young men hither.

THEY were sent for,—the 53d chapter of *Isaiah* was read, *Deavi* and *Yefan* both prayed; the first abounded in thanksgiving, and the other in earnest wrestlings with God. And then wished each other a good night.

Theophilus. How does God disappoint the thoughts of the children of men! and especially when too confident in the flesh. *Yefan* gave his wife a wonderfully good word, and may be she might deserve it, but he was quickly taught, that good temper and mildness will appear as averse to real christianity, as the most rough and surly tempers. There is nothing in the most engaging that disposes towards faith; this is the gift of God. But pray go on.

Epenetus. Next morning, after the worship of God, *Deavi* and his wife made *Yefan* a visit, with a design to assist him under his present distress. By one of the maids, word was carried to *Araf*, for that was *Yefan's* wife's name, that there was a gentlewoman below that wanted to speak with her. When she
came

came down, she was a little surprised to see *Dewi*, but like a gentlewoman, in a handsome manner welcomed him home, and spoke kindly to his spouse, and intreated them to take their seats. When they had so done, *Gweddus* says; Madam, this has been a wonderful journey to your spouse and mine; and I must own amazing grace to me, in bringing me to venture the Salvation of my Soul upon *Jesus* the *Christ*; and my husband and I are come to wait upon you, to give you some account of the dealings of God with us; hoping it may be of use for your present and eternal good.

Araf. Madam, I am very much obliged to you for your kind offer; but beg you would not take it ill, that at present I decline your assistance. If my husband has any thing to say, when convenient, I design to hear him with more patience than I did last night.

UPON this, they took up a little time in common discourse, and parted; but when they were gone, *Araf* put herself in her husband's way, that he might take his opportunity if he would, which he accordingly did; they both sat down, and he began: My dear, I take it as a favour that you are willing to hear me. I went out of curiosity to hear the preacher of christianity, resolved not only to reject, but to deride what I should hear: but 'ere I was aware, a power more than human took hold of my heart, and — *But here she interrupted*, and said, My dear, excuse me, I beg you would not trouble me with any thing you *felt* or *fancied*; if you have any thing you can *rationally* offer against your old religion, and for your new, let me hear it.

Yefan. Then, my dear, observe, my old religion shut me up from the knowledge of the true God; even in *Athens* there is an altar to the *unknown* God; but christianity directs me to the knowledge of the true God, his divine perfections, and how to worship him with acceptance; my old religion kept me from acquaintance with myself, but in the light of christianity I see what I am. My old religion had only some perplexing inquiries after the chief good; but in christianity I see and enjoy it. My old religion frightened and perplexed me with the transmigration of souls, but in Christianity I see that happy souls pass immediately to Christ, into heavenly glory; and shall in due time have their own bodies again. My old religion led to trifling or cruel sacrifices, which the eternal God could never accept of as atonements for the sins of men; but christianity discovers that sacrifice which God himself appointed, and wherein my soul finds rest.

Araf. If you can make good but the principal part of what you said, I promise you it will be no difficulty to make me a christian. Then said *Yefan*, now, my dear; — and began upon the knowledge of the true God; as he went along, she always threw in his way what objections she thought fit, and he removed them as well as he could; but it took up more days than one to go through the whole; a particular account of the debate, the design of my story will not admit; only I must observe that this tedious trial proved of great use to *Yefan*. However, at the conclusion of it, she said, will you agree to a conference with my father, brothers, and other acquaintance, upon these things

in our dining-room? *Yefan* answered, agreed, my dear, fix your day, procure your men.

Syllogisticus. I can't help admiring the grace of God even in perplexing trials and disappointments! What a glorious design runs through and appears upon divine providence. This hard study his wife put him upon, proved to him perhaps as profitable as if he had reasoned daily in the schools.

Theophilus. But seeing family worship is very precious to a believer, his heart must be for worshipping the God of the families of *Israel*; pray how did he do?

Epenetus. The second night he stood resolved upon it, and having fixed *Cradog* in his house and service, he omitted no part of God's worship; solemnly asked a blessing and gave thanks at table; and after supper he called his family together and said, I think it my duty to own the eternal God my Redeemer; he makes it my duty, as a master in my family, to command my children and servants to attend divine worship with me; I shall therefore go before you in reading a part of his word, and calling upon his name: Whereupon his wife withdrew:—It went to his soul; and he sent up a sigh to heaven. Thus he kept on family worship, night and morning, notwithstanding his discouragements. But *Cradog* was of vast service; his master had the pleasure quickly to see all the servants converted.

WELL, the fixed day drew on; and *Dewi* and *Yefan* spent the day before, in fasting and prayer at *Dewi's* house, and *Edgar* and *Cradog* were with them: *Dewi's* family were also present: They offered up many strong cries and tears that day; but *Yefan's* wife thought they were

were together somewhere, consulting what arguments to use, and how to defend them; but their business was with God.

THE appointed time came, her father and brothers were present, and many acquaintance who were desired to be there, so that the dining-room was full. The christians had prayed before they came there; and *Yefan* taking an open bible in his hand, stood up and said, "The word which God sent unto the children of *Israel*, preaching peace by *Jesus Christ* he is Lord of all. How God anointed *Jesus of Nazareth*, with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. Whom the Jews slew, and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God; who did eat and drink with him after he arose from the dead; his servants are commanded to preach unto the people, and testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead; to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins." (r)

MEN, brethren and fathers, said *Yefan*, I was very lately of the number of those who despised this blessed Redeemer, and went to hear him preached with a design to scoff; but the eternal God having mercy on me, was pleased to cause his word to take hold of my heart, and I will now take the freedom to give you a faithful account of that gracious work. *Which he did in a particular manner.*

BUT

BUT before he had half done, he observed a mighty attention, and many tears among the people, which added vigour unto his voice, and courage to his soul; and when he had done, he desired *Dewi* to testify what he knew of God and his work.

THE old gentleman, *Yefan's* father-in-law, whose name was *Didwyll*, immediately stood up and said, My children, brethren and friends, I came here with a design to dispute, and to repel words with words; but now I must own the salvation of *Jesus* the Redeemer, adore and worship. I am convinced the words mentioned out of the book, are the words of the most high God. I never heard any thing like them in my life, they carry their own evidence with them. Blessed be the Lord that ever I heard them; I think it my duty to confess *Jesus Christ*; and I believe with my heart. As a poor perishing sinner, I cast myself upon him alone for peace and pardon; for ever renouncing heathenism root and branch.

THE glory of this day was so weighty upon *Yefan's* soul, that he cried out, *Hosanna! to the Son of David; Hosanna! in the highest.* He could hardly stand up under the comfort; he desired *Dewi* to go to prayer, which he did with great enlargedness of soul. Great was this day, nor could they tell how to part. — To relate how it was with *Yefan's* wife, when with plenteous tears she bewailed her *unbelief*, and admired *divine grace*, expressing her desire of an interest in *Christ*, perhaps may be thought too affecting.

Christophilus. Such seasons I believe were pretty frequent in the early days of christianity, and though it is but low at present, yet greater seasons are coming, when *Zion's* children shall make haste, and shall fly

fly as a cloud. In your account, *Yefan's* wife seemed dejected, but her husband had great reason to admire the wisdom of providence, in overruling her unbelief to bring about such an opportunity. God took off his sackcloth, and girded him with gladness.

Epenetus. True; and his wife had great reason of joy too, for God had reached her by his grace; but she could not chearfully conclude so. The greatness of her unbelief pierced her soul. Her past aversion to *Christianity*—grieving her husband—and refusing to join in family worship, now added unto her load. In short, she entertained fears that she was too great a sinner to be saved; at least doubted whether *Jesus Christ* would save her or no. So here was fresh work cut out for *Yefan*, to remove the doubts and fears of his wife, and encourage her faith. But this turned to a good account afterwards. *

BUT I should have told you, that the people were desirous to know what *they* must do; *Dewi* told them that *Ffyddlon* was expected very soon, and of him they should more particularly inquire; in the mean time desired them all to meet in the same room the next first day of the week; for says he, it is the *Lord's day*, that we may worship him together. Accordingly they met; *Dewi* and *Yefan* prayed, read the scriptures, and according to the best of their ability gave the *sense*; several more came and were reached by grace. They kept meetings also on week-days, and many gathered to them, and great was the success; so that in a little time there were several scores converted; so mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.

Neophytus. But you say, they read the word, and gave the sense, which is a kind of *preaching*: Pray by what authority did they this?

Epenetus. When there was upon a time a great persecution against the church which was at *Jerusalem*, they were all scattered abroad, except the apostles; and they that were scattered went every where preaching the word; it was by the same authority they did this. There was a certain Jew named *Apollus*, who spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of *John*, nor did *Aquila* and *Priscilla* who expounded to him the way of God more perfectly, nor yet the apostles, when they came to know of it, blame him as one wanting authority;—by the same authority they taught. “He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully (s). If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God (t).” Do I see a person perishing, and have I not a call from God to do all I can to save him? The person to whom God has given gifts and abilities to do good, has certainly a call from God to do it.

Neophytus. But does not this destroy gospel order; and open a door unto any vain person to take upon him that sacred work, though never called to it?

Epenetus. Not at all; the work was necessary, though there was no church as yet to call them thereunto. It is God that calls to the work, and gives ability for it; the church can do nothing in it but own God’s call, and follow him. But as to vain persons who take upon them this work, however unqualified for it, the sin is theirs.

Theophilus. My dear *Neophytus*, it is God that gives the ability and authority to preach, and inclines the heart

to.

(s) *Jer.* xliii. 28.(t) *1 Pet.* iv. 10, 11.

to desire the good work; a Church of *Christ* in sending any person forth, does but acknowledge this already done. No church in the world can *effect* any part of it. The regular call of a church, where it may be had, makes the whole orderly and beautiful, and *recommends* the person to service and acceptance; but the *authority* must be from above: Otherwise, the eternal God will say unto him, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes? Excuse us, beloved *Epenetus*, and proceed.

Epenetus. Sooner than was expected, though not sooner than was desired, *Ffyddlon* comes to town, and with him *Tosyriol*, in whose house the bishop lodged, and also the honest godly landlord *Buddiol*, and *Alfred* his man. They were received with the utmost respect and affection; (christians were very dear to each other in those days;) and after a small refreshment, they worshipped God together at *Yefan's* house, *Dewi* and all his family being there. *Dewi's* wife cheerfully confessed her faith in the Redeemer, and *Yefan's* wife, with many tears, declared she ventured all upon *Christ*, believing there was Salvation no where else; whereupon they both, and all theirs, were baptized straightway.* Their servants also, together

* FROM the account of Baptism being administered, as above, *Neophytus* takes occasion to ask a few questions relative to that ordinance. The substance of the replies and arguments is as follows.

1. THAT baptism was administered to infants, in the apostolic age, is pleaded from scripture examples and precepts; for the former are urged *Acts* xvi. 15. *Lydia* was baptized and her household. *Acts* xvi. 33. The Jailor was baptized, and all his straightway. *1 Cor.* i. 16. I baptized also the household of *Stephanas*; — and for the latter, *Acts* ii. 38, 39. Be baptized every one of you, you and your

gether with *Edgar* and *Cradog*, confessing their faith in the *Lord Jesus*, were baptized immediately; their little meeting was concluded with prayer and praise; and now being late, they prepared for rest; and a servant

your children. The reason why you *parents* should be baptized is, BECAUSE the *promise* is to you; but the promise is to your *children* also, and THEREFORE they should be baptized.

2. THAT baptism was administered by the application or sprinkling of water, and not by plunging, is maintained from *Acts* ix. 9. 18, 19. *Paul* was *three days* and neither did eat nor drink, — and was baptized, — and when he had received meat he was strengthened. His sore condition of body and mind, makes it highly improbable that he was immersed. Also *Acts* xvi. 33. The jailor washed the stripes of *Paul* and *Silas*, and he was baptized, and all his straightway.

3. As to scripture phrases and expressions, as they relate to the mode of baptism, such as *in Jordan*, into the water, out of the water, buried in baptism, and *John* baptizing in *Enon*, because there was much water there; — it is replied, that all means no more than at *Jordan*, to the water, from the water, with *Christ* in the baptism of his sufferings, and *John* chusing to preach and baptize in a country, where the multitudes and their beasts might be refreshed. — The word *Baptizo*, it is remarked, is so far from signifying nothing but dipping or plunging, that, on the contrary, there are many places in the New Testament where we are under an absolute necessity to understand pouring or sprinkling by it; and that there is never a place in the scripture where it does necessarily signify plunging or dipping. *Mark* vii. 4. And when they come from the market, except they wash (Greek baptize) they eat not. — the washing (Greek baptizing) of cups and pots, — brazen vessels and tables. *1 Cor.* x. 1, 2. All our fathers were under the cloud, — and were all baptized. *Heb.* ix. 10. Diverse washings (Greek baptisms.)

4. THE ground of infant's right to baptism, is somewhat singular. Interest in the promise gives a right to baptism, the children of all the called have a right to the promise. But this absolute com-

mission

servant was ordered to inform all the Christians, that Efyddlon was come, and was to preach in that room at a certain hour next day.

At

nection between a *natural* descent from godly parents, and an interest in the *spiritual*, eternal covenant, is liable to many *weighty objections*.

In reviewing this subject, which has of late especially engaged the attention of the publick, and the pens of able writers, I perceive, that the champions on the *one* side are by no means agreed upon this question, *On what is the RIGHT of infants to baptism founded?* And those on the *other* know very well how to avail themselves of the fact. The Pædobaptists generally in defending their cause, content themselves with urging a *variety* of topics which *separately* considered appear to have but little weight; whereas taken in their *collective* force, they seem to amount to a conclusive argument, and a sufficient apology for their practice.— Their opponents are aware of this, and immediately seize their bundle of arrows; and taking them one by one, they *break* some and *bind* others, triumphing in the success.

For my own part, should any ask me why, as a christian minister, I baptize an infant? I can truly answer that I have the very *same reason* for doing it that *John* the baptist had for baptizing *penitent* sinners, in *Jordan* and *Enon*; — the *same reason* that *Jesus*, by the ministry of his disciples, had, for baptizing a still greater multitude; — and, finally, the *same reason* that our baptist brethren have, or *ought* to have, and which they *profess* to have in the general tenor of their *practice*, for baptizing adults. — But this is not a place to inter into particulars. — At present, — without derogating from the due force of those arguments commonly adduced, — I shall content myself with the following remarks.

1. *WHATEVER* there may be in the ordinance of baptism of a *positive* consideration, there is nothing relative to the *subjects* of it so *merely positive* as to be independent on all *moral* grounds; — nay further, whatever relates to the qualifications of the subjects, is of a nature *entirely moral*, — and to say otherwise must imply a *contradiction*. Baptism, therefore, is an ordinance of a *mixed nature*, partly *positive* and partly *moral*.

At the hour appointed the following day, there came a crouded auditory; and *Ffyddlon's* text was, *Isaiah lvi. 8.* "The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of *Israel* faith, yet will I gather others to him, besides those that are gathered unto him." And in the afternoon, (for he preached twice that day) *John vi. 37.* "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." And God did greatly own the word of his grace; the converted were in a manner, on the mount all the day long, and many more were turned to the Lord. And the christians that came with *Ffyddlon*, were made so glad with God's work, that they cried out, — *Blessed be the glory of the Lord from this place!* The next day

Ffyddlon

2. As far as this, or any such ordinance, partakes of a moral nature, the *reason* and design of the law, or if you please the *spirit* of it, is our rule of duty; — And *only* so far as it partakes of a *positive* nature is the *letter* of the law our rule.

3. As what relates to the *qualifications* of the subjects is of moral consideration, we are necessitated to seek in them the *reason* and *intention* of the command; — but infants, partaking of the great *primary* qualification, which the *evident design* of the ordinance requires, *ought* to be baptized; and it must imply breach of duty in a minister to decline it.

To argue on this principle — "Baptism is a positive right and therefore OUGHT to be express, full and circumstantial" — is, on the principles, concessions and practice of Antipædobaptists, demonstrably *fallacious*. For, the law of baptism is evidently, in *fact*, not circumstantial and determinate, and therefore is not, cannot be an institution *entirely* positive. See Mr. *Beach's Pædobaptism examined*, (p. 11. *et passim*) a work lately published, which discovers a considerable degree of *good temper*, ingenuity, labour and erudition; but, if I mistake not, a great part, if not the whole *fabrick*, of which rests on the above *indefensible* hypothesis,

Ffyddlon preached from *Haggai* ii. 4. *Be strong and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord.* Where he put them upon, and directed them into, church fellowship; whereupon after he had done, the people desired more particular instructions.

Christophilus. I could wish to know what those instructions were, and how they were followed.

Epenetus. Having observed to them how God was worshipped by the *Patriarchs*, and afterwards by the church of *Israel*, under the *mosaic* institutions; he told them how, upon the change of the priesthood, there was of necessity also a change of the law; (u) explained to them that law of the redeemer which regards his church, its matter, form and order, and desired them to fix upon all they judged really godly as fit materials for the spiritual building.

Neophytus. This very entrance seems a hard task; how could they judge who *were* really godly?

Theophilus. In their search after real godliness, churches should desire the eternal God to direct them, and faithfully do what they can.

Christophilus. Want of faithfulness and care this way has brought desolation and ruin upon many churches: A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump; and a root of bitterness springing up will defile many. (v) When *Saul*, afterwards *Paul*, assayed to join himself to the disciples, they were afraid to receive him, till they were satisfied that he was a converted person. (w)

Neophytus. Though I am young, yet to my grief I have seen several, who were members of churches,
whose

(u) *Hab.* vii, 13.

(v) *Hab.* xii, 15.

(w) *Act.* ix, 26, 27.

whose conversation discovered very little real godliness, if any: And ungodly people, by many things they could observe, must think them the very same with themselves, notwithstanding the claim they might lay to religion.*

Theophilus. Such persons, either putting on a form of religion, and shew of zeal, crept in unawares and deceived the church (for no church upon earth is *infallible*) or else have been overcome by their own corruptions, and the temptations of Satan, and so as poor backsliders are led into captivity by the law of sin. However, a church of Christ walking according to rule, will not suffer such to stand long in church-relation, to the dishonour of *Zion's King*, and the hurt of his sincere subjects.

Neophytus. No doubt an immoral walk, whereby ungodliness discovers itself, is dishonourable and dangerous: But discoursing the other day with one, he told me it was a wrong thing to insist upon the *new birth*, and faith, and real godliness; for thereby a wrong step, in persons pretending thereto, becomes the more *remarkable*, and draws a heavier censure; and therefore he thought that *moral honesty* was enough to be required of any church-members.

Christophilus. But when you see him next, pray ask him, what part hath a true *believer* in Christ with a moral quiet *infidel*? Can they be equally yoked? Are they suited to *mourn* together under a sense of the sinfulness

* Would to God that this were not a prevailing evil in the *present* day, when the world and the churches of Christ are so dangerously intermixt! May he whose fan is in his hand, by his word and spirit in his churches, separate the *chaff* from the wheat!

sinfulness of sin? To *rejoice* together in the dear Redeemer? To *pray* together for the light of God's countenance, and the refreshments of his presence? One says in his heart, "It is good for me to draw near to God, his face will I seek;" — the other says in his heart to God, "Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Are they fit for the most intimate communion and fellowship? Can they "Strengthen the hands of each other in God?"

Neophytus. It was said that *Ffyddlon* desired *them* to fix upon whom they judged really godly; was not *he* more capable of judging?

Epenetus. So they would have him do; but he told them it was their proper business to satisfy themselves with regard to each other's faith, experience and conversation; that a relation of, and an inquiry into, each other's acquaintance with the grace of God, would lay a lasting foundation for the most intimate fellowship under Christ's yoke.

Theophilus. There are some in the world who take no care of this, but leave all with the *preacher*; but christian churches are for christian communion, which, without acquaintance with each other's faith in Christ, and experience of the grace of God, can hardly be maintained. — But pray what further instruction did *Ffyddlon* give them?

Epenetus. They being well satisfied in each other's godliness, and filial inclinations to follow the Lord in all his pure institutions, he advised them to fix a day of fasting and prayer, that after solemnly seeking God they might according to his will, publicly resign themselves and theirs unto the dear Redeemer in a church

church state.—He also put them upon and assisted them in some things *preparatory* thereunto.

Christophilus. Pray what things were they?

Epenetus. You shall have the substance of them presently.—The fixed day came, and all the godly were there betimes; they looked upon it as the greatest day of their lives,—the day of their publick espousals. *Yefan* began, and the rest in order followed, publickly to acknowledge their sin and guilt:—They mourned,—they wept,—they loathed themselves in their own sight,—and admired the patience of God towards them.

Neophytus. This was looking to him whom they had pierced, and mourning for him as one mourneth for an only son.

Epenetus. It was so: But after some time they in the tenderest manner owned the wonders of grace, in making the word effectual to them for their conversion from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God;—and in this they were very particular and affecting.

Neophytus. Thus they declared his mighty acts, and uttered the memory of his great goodness.

Epenetus. Yes; and appearing in the compleatness and beauty of their holy profession, they sang of his righteousness, with tears of joy.—And old *Didroyll* spoke aloud.—“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my
“soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed
“me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered
“me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom
“decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride
“adorneth herself with jewels.”

E

Neophytus.

Neophytus. Thus Jehovah was their strength and their song, having become their salvation.

Epenetus. True; and in the next place they recognized the great design of the day, and blessed God that ever they were born to see it, and that they were all there present to make a publick surrender of themselves to the Lord.

It was agreed that *Yefan* should go before them in the work of the day: He then stood up and read with an audible voice the confession of faith, which contained the principal heads of divinity; — much to the same purpose with what we call the *Assembly's* and the *Savoy* confessions.

Neophytus. Then the doctrine we call *calvinism* is, I see, a great deal older than *Calvin*.

Epenetus. Aye, to be sure; for he took it out of the bible, and so did these: But *Yefan* having read it distinctly through, said to the people, — If thus you believe with the heart, — and if thus you are ready at all times to confess with the mouth, — stand up and signify it by lifting up the hand: — *Which they unanimously did.*

THEN *Yefan* read the *covenant*, the people all sitting; and told them that this was the holy engagement they were now going to enter into before the Lord; and having read it to them, he said he would now read it for them and himself, and desired they would all stand up, with their right hand lifted up towards heaven; and at the conclusion they all said, *amen*: And *Yefan*, the company being seated, said, —

“ But Christ as a son over his own house; whose
“ house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and
“ the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end: The
“ house

“ house of God, the church of the living God; no
 “ more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens
 “ with the saints, and of the household of God: And
 “ are built upon the foundation of the apostles and
 “ prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief
 “ corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed
 “ together, groweth up an holy temple in the
 “ Lord, in whom we also are built together for an
 “ habitation of God through the spirit.”

THEY sung the 12th chapter of *Isaiah*; and *Yefan* concluded with prayer. — Upon this *Ffyddlon* said, — Brethren, the church of Christ, of which I am pastor, knew nothing of this great work of God when we came from home, else we should have been sent as *messengers* to behold your faith and order; and approving of both, should have given you in the name of the church, the right hand of fellowship; but blessed be the God of all grace, this is beyond our expectation; as *private christians* we own you a precious church of Christ. — Then *Yefan* desired him to give them a word of exhortation; which he did, with great affection, and the meeting concluded with prayer and praise.

Neophytus. WELL, great was such a day's work; — but will you oblige me with at least an abstract of the covenant?

Epenetus. It ran thus: “ We poor sinners having
 “ destroyed ourselves — yet being brought through
 “ grace and everlasting love to look unto him on
 “ whom our help is laid, — under a sense of our
 “ exceeding sinfulness, repent and mourn before the
 “ Lord: And do here openly, and without reserve,
 “ resign ourselves and ours up wholly to Christ, the

“ complete Saviour of sinners, in church fellowship
 “ and communion; — resolving and promising in
 “ his strength, to believe his *promises*, live by faith on
 “ him, obey his *precepts*, hearken to the voice of his
 “ *providence*, serve him and each other according to
 “ all the laws, statutes and ordinances of his house; —
 “ taking the written word for our rule, aiming in
 “ all at the *glory* of God our Saviour — our prophet,
 “ priest and king, — each other’s edification, the
 “ increase of Christ’s kingdom, and the good of all
 “ mankind, under the special direction, and by the
 “ assistance of the spirit of the Lord.”

THUS you have a plain account of the first church at *Caerludd*, matter and form. — First they were converted by grace, and so *fitted* for a spiritual house; and then under this holy engagement they associated together, and became *formally* a church of Christ.

Theophilus. Our beloved *Epenetus*, we are very much obliged to you for what you have gone through, but I humbly apprehend you have a considerable work still before you. Here is a church indeed, built upon the true foundation, but not *organized*; — there is no *officer* in it. Now I hope you will be pleased to give us some account of their choosing and ordaining their elders?

Neophytus. But, with submission, before that is entered upon, I beg to be further informed concerning the *covenant*, whether it be absolutely necessary to the *being* of a church?

Syllogisticus. To be sure it is: For *how can two walk together except they be agreed?* (x) When persons

sons' faces are turned Zion-ward, then they shall say, *Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten.* (y) Members of churches stand in a special visible relation to each other, and this relation (in adults) is *voluntary*; and therefore persons are received and rejected by *agreement*, which without a covenant would be impossible. — Again, in a church, persons are to be watched over, admonished, called upon not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, &c. and if unto transgression they add obstinate impenitency, then the church is bound to put such away from among themselves; which things necessarily require a *covenant* or *agreement*.

Neophytus. But is it necessary the covenant should be in the very words *Epenetus* gave us?

Syllogisticus. No: Other words may be used, more or fewer, as may be thought most agreeable; but all according to the tenor of the Gospel.

Neophytus. Excuse me: Is it necessary it should be a *written* covenant?

Syllogisticus. Not absolutely necessary, though very expedient; for the more *explicit* the better.

Neophytus. In the covenant it was said they gave up themselves and *theirs*, whereby must be meant their children: Are the children of church members related to the church their parents belong to, as *members* thereof?

Syllogisticus. Without doubt; for it is expressly said concerning new testament churches, that “*their children should also be as afore time.*” (z)

E 3

Neophytus.(y) *Jer.* l. 5.(z) *Jer.* xxx, 20.

Neophytus. But what church *privilege*, are the children of the church entitled to?

Syllogisticus. They are under the *special inspection*, watch and care of the church,—interested in the *prayers* thereof,—as they grow up, should be called upon to every *duty*, and when they are judged *fit*, admitted to the Lord's Supper.

Neophytus. And, pray, are they upon obstinacy in sinful ways to pass under church *censures*?

Syllogisticus. Doubtless: The very nature of the thing requires it; and in a due discharge of it they may expect the blessing. *

Neophytus.

* DR. DODDRIDGE, in his course of lectures, after enumerating several advantages attending the church-membership of infants, adds,—“ But it is by a very particular turn of thought, that Mr. *Morris*, in his dialogues, argues, that such relation to the church may bring them within the reach of its *censures*, in case of gross misbehaviour, which if allowed may be a *considerable benefit*: But perhaps it may be urged, that the counterpart to this is admitting them to the Lord's table, if they do nothing to deserve censure.” — Lect. ccv. On which I remark,

1. If infants have a *right* to baptism, what assignable reason is there why they have not a consequential right to *church membership*? And if they are entitled to the latter, why should they not be treated as other members are; especially as a *considerable benefit* might attend it?

2. As to the objection, “ That the counterpart to this is to admit them to the Lord's table, if they do nothing to deserve censure,” — I ask, what is there unreasonable or unscriptural in such an objection? Nay further, in point of *right*, how can the two ordinances be separated? Are not “ The *same reasons* which are brought for “ infant baptism, in like manner applicable to infant communion? “ And will not the objections against the latter admit of the same “ answer as those against the former?” — See Mr. JAMES PEIRCE's *essay in favour of the ancient practice of giving the Eucharist to children*. Nor do I see how his reasoning can be evaded by a consistent

Neophytus. But if the children are moral in their walk, and attend upon publick worship, and the means of grace, yet backward to profess their faith in the salvation of Christ, what must the church do?

Syllogisticus. Continue their good offices of prayer for them, love to them, watch over them, and wait.

Neophytus. May all the churches flourish and shine in this duty and privilege! — If in any of these inquiries I have been impertinent, I hope I shall be excused; and now, father *Epenetus*, please to proceed and acquaint us what officers they chose, and how they ordained them? *

Epenetus. I hope, when convenient, to gratify my neighbours therewith; but at present, time fails us, and other duties call. — May consolation and usefulness attend you!

Christophilus. And may we all be blessed with heart-refreshing views of this “beauty of the Lord” upon all the churches; “His work appearing to his servants, and his glory to their children!”

E 4.

DIALOGUE

sistent pædobaptist, while we only attend to the *legal rights* of infants to that ordinance; but such advocates for the *practice* must allow that many things are *lawful* which are not *expedient*. And should it be granted that a christian minister cannot justly deny the Eucharist to any church member (who does not lie under its censure,) when demanded, yet there are prudential reasons why a parent should not desire it for infants and young children: Especially when we reflect that though the *ground* of right is the *same*, the nature and design of the two ordinances are *different*.

* The church of *Caerludd* made application to *Ffyddlon*, that he would leave *Hyfrydle* and come and settle among them: Which he declined on the principles of — the *mutual affection* subsisting between him and his flock, — his past and present *usefulness* among them, — and, finally, the want of a *satisfactory call* from God to remove.

DIALOGUE III.

Ffyddlon preparing for his departure. Alfred left at Caerludd. Publick thanks given to Ffyddlon. He departs. Their usefulness at an inn, where the landlord turns apostate. Letter to Hyfrydle for messengers. A more public call to Officers. Pastors, Teachers, Ruling-Elders, and Deacons, what. Dewi, and two Persons nominated for Deacons, go to Hyfrydle. Return with the Messengers from thence. The Ordination of Officers.

THEOPHILUS.

OUR dear *Neophytus* is here waiting; I doubt not but eagerness to hear the pleasing story of the ancient *Britons* forming themselves into evangelical societies, for the service of their Redeemer, brought him hither so soon; and I am sorry we should make him stay for us, only I know he can improve his solitary hours to very good purpose.

Neophytus. My dear neighbours, I am glad to see so many of you come: I must own I am eager to hear the story, and your profitable remarks upon it.*

—I

* As *Ephraim* was not yet come, *Neophytus* proposed a question or two to the company present: I, Since

— I hope I am thankful that he, who determines the bounds of our habitations, has called me to sojourn at *Pothaina*; and I thank you, my dear neighbours, for your kind endeavours for my instruction. — But here is our beloved *Epenetus*, and *Christophilus* is just at hand.

E 5

Theophilus.

I. SINCE the bible is allowed to be the only rule of faith and practice, and a very sufficient one, what need was there of a confession of faith and a church covenant? It is replied, (1) The apostolick churches had something similar, called, *The principles of the oracles of God*, and *The form of sound words*. (2) Persons may in general subscribe to the Bible, who at the same time do not believe its contents, as the Sadducees of old respecting the five books of *Moses*, with all ancient and modern *Hereticks*. (3) A collection of the first principles of the oracles of God, is of great use, that in their light, as truths of the greatest importance, other things that offer themselves, may be tried. (4) This is no imposition, because all men have an equal right to collect from scripture what they apprehend principles of faith. (5) An explicit declaration of our principles is honest and generous. (6) Fundamental principles, collected into one consistent view, appear with stronger evidence, and make deeper impressions. A Constellation gives a greater light than dispersed stars. (7) The various *heresies* in the world make it necessary there should be confessions of faith, that they which are approved may be made manifest. See on this subject, Dr. WATTS's Treatise on *The Terms of Christian Communion*, — Quest. iv. viii. x.

II. WHETHER or not a christian pastor may regularly administer the Lord's Supper to any church but that more immediately under his care?

THE answer is given in the negative, but with what propriety let the reader judge from the following particulars adduced for proof. (1) To administer the Lord's Supper is an act of office-power, — but a pastor is an officer no where except in his own church, by which Christ gave him that power. So the officers of one corporation cannot act as officers in another; nor one corpo-

Theophilus. Welcome, welcome, both of you; we thought you long; but *Epenetus* may with the greater cheerfulness proceed in his story; its agreeableness to us discovering itself thus in our early attendance. — We have seen the first christian church gathered and formed at *Caerludd*, unorganized, and *Ffyddlon* and his companions ready to depart; now we hope we shall in the course of this story, see this church furnished and adorned with proper officers and useful gifts, and the beauty of the Lord their God upon them.

Epenetus. My dear friends and brethren, I must then acquaint you, that *Ffyddlon*, having with success and comfort laboured among them, fixed the day of his departure, and desired them to grant him one request, which was, to meet the day before, that

corporation choose officers for another. (2) It implies a claim to the chimerical and arrogant title of *universal* pastor. — But it is allowed he may *preach* elsewhere, as a servant of Christ, in season and out of season. So *Yfan* and *Devi* preached, but could not regularly administer the Lord's supper, because not officially set apart. — Destitute churches may join a neighbour church for *occasional* communion, in virtue of the communion of churches; — so *Plabe* of *Cenbrea* was recommended to the church at *Rome*.

It may be here remarked, that since all *true* churches have the same divine *head*, — are subject to the same *laws*, — and partakers of the same *privileges*, — they have mutually a just claim to *assigned love* from each other; and, as it is their *duty*, so it ought to be their *delight*, most cordially to promote the same *common-interest* of *Christ* in the world, however they may differ in *smaller* matters, relative to officers or discipline. — “My dove, my *undefiled*” (the *true* church) is but ONE.” (Cant. vi. 9.) The formation of christian churches, with their proper officers, existing in *separate* bodies, should be founded on the principles of *convenience* of situation, better *edification*, and the unalienable right of *private judgment*,

that he might worship Christ with them once more, and take his leave of them. Having complied, they met, and he in a very spiritual and affectionate manner, prayed with them, and for them: Then took for his text *Matt. xvi. 18. Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*—He proved to them that Christ the Son of the living God was the *rock*; that the church was his, that he was the *builder* of it; that the power and policy of hell should oppose it, but should never prevail against it. Upon all these he insisted, and was large in instruction and exhortation, and concluded with prayer and praise;—and all the while the most tender passions discovered themselves in the whole assembly: The thoughts of parting went very near them. When he had done, *Buddiol*, the godly landlord, prayed, with an enlarged heart and many tears;—and after him *Toshyriol* prayed, in a very evangelical spirit, and both went over many of the particulars of what they had seen from the beginning, and what they had seen there, admiring the riches of divine grace in the whole, so that all were swallowed up in the joys of heaven, and glory appeared upon all their tears.

Christophilus. You make me wish I had been one of them! Oh, there is a real glory upon christianity, nor is there any comfort of the same kind with that which is enjoyed under the precious gales of the eternal Spirit. May formality and froth be forever banished, and the primitive simplicity and glory of the christian religion restored and established! But, poor hearts, they had their trials too; and my heart, at this distance, seems to sink for them; they must part with *Ffyddlon* and his friends.

Epenetus. True; but they had this to comfort them, he could not say as *Paul* did, *You shall see my face no more*; and, besides, they got *Alfred*, with the consent of his master, *Buddiol*, to stay and fix among them: He was a godly young man, was of great use among young ones, understood *singing* well, instructed others, and went before the congregation in that divine exercise, to the glory and praise of their Redeemer.

BUT I was going to tell you, that when both had prayed, *Didwyll*, *Yefan's* father-in-law, stood up, and spoke to *Ffyddlon* and his friends as follows:

“OUR very dear and much honoured brethren
 “and friends; — I am ordered by this church of
 “Christ to return you thanks for your kind, useful
 “visit. We can never be thankful enough to our
 “dear Redeemer, who sent you hither. Your la-
 “bours among us, your prayers, instructions, and
 “repeated exhortations, in the tenderest love to us;
 “we hope we shall never forget. You have been
 “gentle among us even as a nurse cherisheth her
 “children; in you we have seen the kindness of
 “God. Grief at parting is what becomes us;
 “but the views of an eternal abode together with
 “Christ above, should at the same time fill us with
 “gladness of heart. We are humbly thankful to
 “the Lord, that you have the tidings to carry home,
 “that there is a church of Christ at *Gaerludd*; a num-
 “ber of poor creatures, who not many months ago
 “were in the depth of heathenism, now brought to
 “embrace the Redeemer and submit to his yoke; and
 “we testify that we find it easy. We own your kind
 “assistance in teaching us how, according to Christ’s
 “insti-

“ institution, to take this yoke upon us, and become
“ a visible church of his; and, we hope, we shall
“ be helped further to follow your instructions in
“ the choice and ordination of a *Pastor*, a *Teacher*,
“ *Ruling Elders*, with other *helps*, necessary for our
“ edification, establishment and comfort. We beg
“ the continuance of your prayers and advice. I hope
“ we shall see you at the time appointed, and receive
“ you, as messengers from that church of Christ you
“ belong to, for our assistance in the solemn work.
“ May the eternal God continually protect and bless
“ you, with his communion and comforts, and may
“ all prosperity attend the interest of our Redeemer.”

THEN was sung the 67th *psalm*, and the church was for that time dismissed.

ALL the church was in tears at the thoughts of parting, for they all looked upon *Ffyddlon* as their Bishop, and now regarded themselves as sheep without a shepherd: But he spoke comfortably to them, with all the tokens of tenderness and love, and prayed them to look up to the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. They took their leave of him, and yet could *not* take their leave; they would go, and come again, and still do the same; and those who had taken their leave of him over night, were there again in the morning. They acted like people that were willing never to part; but part they must; and, at parting, the most tender tokens of love abounded on both sides, to the astonishment of many Heathen beholders.

Theophilus. Our Lord informed his people, that by their *love* one to another the world should know them to be his disciples. There is something in *christian*
love

love of a singular nature; he that dwells in it dwells in God, and God in him: It lasteth for ever; whatever is against God, is against that, and whatever is against that, is against God; it is inseparable from faith, the distinguishing character of a christian, our present glory; and where among professors it appears not, call that place *Ichabod*; but where it shines, say, *The Spirit of God and of glory resteth here*. This love among those who professed christianity was very useful in the primitive times; often were persons converted in beholding it; and, perhaps, such fruit might follow the fervent love of those *Christian Britons*.

Epenetus. And, perhaps, you may hear something of that. As I said, part they did; but pretty many citizens went with them to a certain *Inn* about fifteen miles out of town, whither they had sent orders to prepare a dinner. They chose a large room, and when some dishes were brought in, *Ffyddlon*, in a very spiritual affectionate manner, begged the blessing of Heaven on the food prepared, and that God would by his Spirit guide and bless their conversation while together; and that they might be a blessing there and wherever they went.

Christophilus. Now my heart begins to beat, expecting to hear of something done for God there.

Epenetus. They being pretty many, most of the family were near to offer their attendance and service; but were amazed to observe their ways. Their conversation was serious yet chearful; a precious vein of powerful religion running through the whole. They discoursed of the tender providence of God in the table prepared, and under holy elevations of soul, discoursed of the eternal provision in Christ, and the

the wonders of grace in bringing such poor sinners, who had destroyed themselves, into acquaintance with the bread of life, that cometh down from heaven. Love and delight sat on their countenances, their religious pleasure was great, and the *attention* of the family very singular. At last, says the landlord, *Gentlemen*, forgive me, I never was so uncivil to any company in my life; nor did I see my family behave thus: I don't know how to blame them, I am in fault myself; we seem *listeners*, but gentlemen, forgive us; I am confounded, I know not what I say, or what to do. Oh! my heart! Oh! bread of life! and with that he and his family burst into tears in abundance.

Philalethes. What a mercy was here! What a testimony the Lord bore to the word of his grace!—May all the Inns in *Britain* be frequented by such guests. Oh! it is cutting to hear *landlords* with a *sacer*, say, of some companies in their houses and gardens, Ha! these are some of our saints and believers! they belong to ———; come, if *they* do so, I hope *we* may without offence follow.—But, pray go on.

Epenetus. When they had dined, *Efyddlon* returned. Thanks to the Lord for their refreshment; and for what they had seen of his work in that place, and desired the blessing of Heaven upon them all, that sinners might be converted, believers in Christ edified, and the kingdom of the Redeemer enlarged. They sat a while, had religious talk with the landlord, his wife and servants; and endeavoured to instruct them in some of the *main* principles of the christian religion; and they all, with many tears, gave

gave vast attention, and the landlord's concern seemed to exceed all the rest.

AFTER a while they parted, some for the country and some for *Caerludd*; and the great affection discovered in them all, fastened Conviction and concern in the hearts of the beholders: They never had seen *such* love in all their lives.

Christophilus. I now want to know how it went with this family as to religion.

Epenetus. The christians that were to return to *Caerludd*, stayed as long as they could to cherish and encourage this new work; and one or two of them went to prayers, and before they departed, gave them all the best advice they could, and recommended them "to God and the word of his grace." After then, for some time, once or twice in a week, they would visit this family to encourage the work, and see how it thrived. — To make short of my story; after a few months, the landlord turned his back upon them, and would not see them: His wife it was hoped, had some good thing in her towards the Lord God of *Israel*; but being confined to him, and such a house, led a sort of a dejected life, all her time afterwards; yet not without some hopes: The servants, when their time was out, removed to *Caerludd*, into christian families, and proved eminent christians all their days.

Neophytus. With submission, I want to follow the bishop *Ffyddlon*, home to his church; for he had a letter to read, and there were messengers to be sent; pray how was all that?

Epenetus. In a full church meeting, *Ffyddlon* informed the congregation, that he had a letter to read
from

from a newly gathered church of Christ in *Caerludd*, gave them a short account of their faith and order, which they heard with many tears of joy, and then he read as follows:

*"The church of Christ sojourning at Caerludd, unto
"the church of Christ sojourning at Hyfrydle,
"and the adjacent villages, all grace, and
"peace from God our Father, and the Lord
"Jesus Christ our Redeemer.*

"DEARLY BELOVED IN OUR LORD,

"IT is not long since we sat in the region
"and shadow of death, without any desire after the
"knowledge of God; strangers to the covenant of
"promise, and without God in the world: But we
"have found him whom we did not seek, and he
"is manifested unto us though we asked not for him.
"May heaven be for ever filled with praises to God
"for this salvation! We call upon you, and all the
"people of God, to be thankful to the Father of
"Lights on our behalf. Our first fruits were met
"with in your assemblies; and God hath greatly
"spread the blessing. — We are, Oh amazing mercy
"we can say it! We are a church of Christ; and
"we do with the greatest freedom profess that he
"is our beloved, and our friend. He is precious
"to us, and enables us to believe that we are pre-
"cious to him; it is our desire to follow him fully.
"We are not yet furnished with proper officers for
"his service and our edification; but our ascended
"Lord, who giveth gifts unto men, encourages us
"to hope that we have those among ourselves he
"designs for service; and we trust that he will direct

"our

" our choice. We have with submission to the over-
 " ruling providence of our Redeemer, fixed upon
 " the 8th and 9th days of the 7th month next en-
 " suing, for the setting them apart by solemn or-
 " dination to their proper work. We earnestly beg
 " your prayers for us, and that you would please
 " to send your Messengers to behold our order, and
 " to strengthen our hands. Your honoured pastor
 " hath been already very useful among us, and his
 " return with other Messengers at the time appointed
 " will be very acceptable to,

" Your brethren in the best bonds."

THE church with vast attention and joy, heard this
 letter; and the question being put, Whether they
 would send Messengers to the church at *Caerludd*,
 in answer to this request? If they would, to signify
 it by lifting up their hands:—*Which was immedi-
 ately and unanimously done.*—Then, after considering
 and consulting several persons, it was thought proper
 that *Ffyddlon* the Pastor, and *Cywir* a Teacher in the
 church, who lived in a distant village, and *Buddiwl*
 and *Tostyriol*, who had been there before, should be
 their Messengers; and they were asked, Whether they
 were willing to go upon that service, if the church
 would send them? They said, they were: Upon this,
 it was put to the church, Whether they appointed
 the mentioned persons, as their messengers to the
 church of Christ at *Caerludd*? If they did, to sig-
 nify it as before; *Which they unanimously did.*—
 And one was called to pray, that God would gra-
 ciously bless the design.

PRAYER.

PRAYER being ended, an affectionate Brother in the church stood up, and moved, That a day of thanksgiving to the Lord might be appointed, that he had in such mercy entered the great City of *Caerludd*, and fixed the Redeemer's throne there. The question was put and agreed to, and the day was observed with great solemnity and praise.

Theophilus. You have kindly answered *Neophytus's* desire: Now I want to follow the young christians to *Caerludd*, and hear what steps they took: *Ffyddlon*, no doubt, gave them the best advice he could before he left them; only as far as you please I would be informed of the particulars.

Epenetus. While *Ffyddlon* was yet with them he frequently desired they would call *Yefan* and *Dewi* to exercise the gifts they had; and the church always complied with *Ffyddlon's* advice; and *Yefan* and *Dewi*, with great seriousness and humility, complied with the Call of the church. They used to read portions of scripture, *give the sense*, compare spiritual things with spiritual, and infer what appeared to them "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." *Ffyddlon* observed, that, wherein each of them seemed to excel, the church might take the greater notice, and in the choice walk after the Lord.

Theophilus. Brethren and friends, the beauty of the Lord our God was upon them! Oh! when will he please to give us *pastors* as at the first, and *teachers* as at the beginning!

Epenetus. As I told you, they heard them occasionally, while *Ffyddlon* was yet with them; and now having heard them two Lord's days, besides several
week

days in the week; the church appointed a *solemn day* of fasting and prayer before the Lord, that he would *guide* their minds, and determine their choice, as most for his glory and their edification. Accordingly they kept the day, fasted, prayed and wept before the Lord. — At last, *Didwyll*, who was chosen for that time to be the mouth of the church, said to *Yefan* and *Dewi*, You both are desired to withdraw, for a little time; — which they complied with; — then *Didwyll* said, “ Brethren, we are a Church of Christ
“ through grace, but have no *bishops*, only the great
“ *Bishop* of our souls, in heaven. It is his will there
“ should be Overseers of the flock, under shepherds
“ that shall feed his Sheep and Lambs. He giveth
“ gifts unto men, that some may be *pastors*, and some
“ *teachers*, “ For the perfecting of the saints, for the
“ work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body
“ of Christ.” Many of us have thought that our brother
“ *Dewi* is designed by our great shepherd for
“ our *pastor*, and our brother *Yefan* for our *teacher*.
“ Use all freedom, my dear brethren, and consider
“ whether it is the Will of our Lord Jesus that we
“ should call them to these honourable employ-
“ ments?”

EACH brother spoke his mind freely, and they all said, they believed it was the *will of Christ* they should. The *sisters* also, by their silence, signified the same thing: For women were not suffered to speak in the church; but if any one thought that she had something of importance to offer, she called a brother out and desired him to do it: Thus it was from the beginning. But here, as I said, they were all of one mind; and *Yefan* and *Dewi* being called in, *Didwyll* said
unto

unto the church, " Brethren, if you do give brother
" *Dewi* a call to be your *pastor*, and brother *Yefan* a
" call to be your *teaching elder*, signify it by lifting up
" your hands:" Which they unanimously did. — Then
said *Didwyll*, " Brother *Dewi*, and *Yefan*, you see
" how the hearts of your brethren are determined,
" and you hear their call; I humbly hope you'll
" think it is the call of Christ by them; in his name
" and theirs I desire your answer." They both an-
swered, that Christ was precious to them, and the
church very dear, and that the service of Christ and
the church was their delight; that they were willing,
though weak, to draw under their master's yoke until
death; desired the prayers of the church for gifts,
strength and success from above; that their separation
unto office in the church might be according to due
order; and that *ruling elders* and *deacons* might be no-
minated also to assist them in the work and concerns of
the Redeemer's kingdom. Upon this they were asked,
who did they think proper persons for ruling elders
and deacons? They answered, that if the church
thought fit, they should greatly like the brethren,
Didwyll and *Diwyd* for ruling elders; and the bre-
thren, *Dysal*, *Llawen*, *Tirion* and *Haelionus* for deacons.
Without any more ado it was immediately put to the
church, whether they approved of the mentioned
brethren for those offices, and called them thereunto?
It went unanimously in the affirmative; and the
brethren, being desired to give in their answer, said,
they submitted themselves to Christ and the church;
and earnestly desired prayers that they might be fitted
for their work and service: Upon this, part of the;

68th psalm was sung, and the meeting concluded with prayer. *

Neophytus. Pray, before we come to their ordination, let me be favoured with some instructive account of those distinct offices.

Syllogisticus. The officers of the church in general are *bishops and deacons*, (a) and their work is *prophecy* and *ministry*. (b) The bishops are either those that *teach* and *rule*, or those that *rule only*. The first sort are distinguished into *pastors* and *teachers*; but I pray my friends to speak of those in order.

Philologicus. The name *pastor* (or I. PASTOR. *shepherd*) is metaphorical, and seems very *His name* comprehensive of all the duties required *and office.* of such a servant of Christ; so that whenever he thinks of his name, he may take a view of his great work, to *feed* the flock committed to his care.—Of pastoral care there are two parts, that of *instruction* and that of *rule*, or discipline: (c) And for such a work as this there must be a competent measure of gifts and abilities, compassion and love to the flock, a continual watchfulness over them, zeal for God and universal holiness.

Philalethes.

* THIS Day of fasting and prayer was appointed not only to implore the divine blessing on the intended ordination, but for a more *express* and regular call of the Pastors and Teachers to their respective offices, or a *repetition* of what was done when *Ffyddlon* was with them; and for the nomination of other *helping* officers; whereby a greater solemnity and beauty attended their proceedings.

(a) *Phil.* i, 1.

(b) *Rom.* xii. 6, 7.

(c) *1 Pet.* v. 2.

Philalethes. It is indeed promised that God would give unto his church, “ *pastors* according to his own heart, which should feed them with knowledge and understanding, (d)” and this they must do, by “ giving themselves wholly unto the word and prayer and labouring in the word and doctrine:” (e)

And unto this, it is certain, *spiritual wisdom*, and understanding in the mysteries of the gospel, are required; and a real inward experience of the power of the truth, skill to *divide the word of truth aright*, (f) so as to give to each his *portion in due season*, (g) an acquaintance with the state of the flock, and tender compassions for the souls of men, must be looked upon as absolutely necessary.

Theophilus. By such qualifications as these, they are fitted in a great measure for their business with the flock, but there lies upon their hands great business at the throne of grace for the flock. They must be men of prayer, and constantly engaged in supplications for those more immediately under their care; that the word of grace may be attended with great success; the church may be daily edified in faith, love and holiness, &c. — And for this purpose, special acquaintance with the various circumstances, and spiritual wants of the flock, must be necessary.

Philalethes. And I must observe that it is the *pastor's* duty, not only to preach the truth, as I observed before, but also to defend it against all opposition. The

pastors

(d) *Jer.* iii. 15. (e) *Acts* vi. 4. and *2 Tim.* v. 17, (f) *2 Tim.* ii. 15,

(g) *Luke* xii. 42.

pastors must contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; they must take heed to themselves, and to their doctrine, and every way oppose whatever is erroneous. And, because it is impossible men should defend any truth they are ignorant of, it is necessary *pastors* should be men of a clear, comprehensive *knowledge* of the doctrines of the gospel, filled with *love* thereto, having an aversion to *novel* opinions and bold conjectures: And it is expedient they should be men of learning and ability, to discern and confute whatever opposes the truth, and to appear in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. (h)

Theophilus. True; and the administration of the *Lord's supper* is committed to them, *A. Adminis-* and they are to consider all the necessary circumstances, belonging thereto, *tering the* as to time, place, frequency and order; — to keep to the institution of *Lord's supper.* Christ, and take care that holy things should be only to holy persons; and that, when they are *come together into one place.* (i) *

Christophilus.

(h) *Phil.* i. 17.

(i) *1 Cor.* xi. 20, 23.

* *Neophytus* inquires why the administration of *baptism* is not mentioned as another special part of the Pastor's work, as well as the *Lord's supper*? — It is replied, 1. That baptism is no church ordinance. *Ananias*, a certain disciple at *Damascus*, baptized *Paul*, not in a church, nor was he yet received a church member: Nor do we read of any person in the new Testament that was baptized in a church, or as being a church member. 2. Though Pastors baptize, they do it not as *Pastors*, but as *Teachers* in common. — *Go teach all nations, baptizing them,* Matt. xxviii. 19. *Whoever teaches may baptize,*

Christophilus. To what has been mentioned concerning the work of *pastors*, I take leave to add, that they are also to take all the *care* they can of the *poor*, visiting the *sick* and afflicted, and to shew all tenderness and love to the *distressed*: Also, to bear a principal part in the rule and government of the church.

5. Care of the flock and government.

Neophytus. From the account you have given of a Pastor and his work, there seems to be no room for any other officer but himself.

Christophilus. And why could not you, my dear *Neophytus*, as well have inferred that, seeing his work is *so great*, — it was necessary he should have *helps* appointed for his comfort and encouragement, and for the edification of the church?

Neophytus. I grant your inference is more natural: But, how great a work must it be! Oh, *Pastors!* *Pastors!* their work is good, but very great. How does it call for prayer for them! and how does it demand all christian respect and pity! “Who is sufficient for such things!”

Christophilus. There is nothing like *love* to put persons upon acts of service. “*Simon son of Jonas* “lovest thou me? Feed my sheep, feed my lambs.” What are the motives that hundreds have to take the name upon them, is not our business to consider; but whoever is not constrained to the work by the *Love of Christ*, is a stranger to all that is really intended thereby.

Neophytus. But a *Teacher* was mentioned, and pray what is he?

F

Philologus.

Philologus. The officer now to be considered is (ὁ διδασκαλός) *the Teacher*, whose very office and proper work, for which he is set apart, is to *teach*; to expound the Scriptures, to insist much upon the great doctrines of the Bible, and open them; defend them against all erroneous opinions, particularly those apprehended most *dangerous*; *catechize* and instruct all under his care, “Teaching every man, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

Philalethes. It is very plain in the new Testament that Christ does not only set in his church Pastors but Teachers also. (k) In the church at *Antioch* there were *Prophets*, that is, Pastors, and there were Teachers also; (l) so Christ hath set in his church, *first* Apostles; *secondarily*, Prophets; *thirdly*, Teachers. (m) *
Neophytus.

(k) *Eph.* iv. 11.

(l) *Acts* xiii. 1.

(m) 1 *Cor.* xii. 28.

* FROM the distinction above specified, between Pastors and Teachers, *Neophytus* takes occasion to object, That, perhaps, nothing is really intended but another name for the same office. — To this it is replied, 1. That the Apostle, in the passage last cited, is distinctly enumerating all the teaching Officers of the church, and therefore the *difference* he makes must be designed and *real*. 2. In *Eph.* iv. 11. the Apostle does not say Pastors or Teachers, but Pastors and Teachers; Nor is the latter term an *interpretation* of the former, because the one was as well understood as the other. 3. It is asserted, no *instance* can be given of the same officer, at the same time, being expressed by various names. Though the same officers be intended by the terms *Pastors*, *Bishops*, *Priestlyers*, in *different* places of scripture, we no where read of Bishops and Presbyters: The reason is plain, because the office is one and the *same*. 4. A different *work* is assigned them. See *Rom.* xii. 7, 8: Where persons of different gifts and Offices are exhorted to attend diligently to their proper work; *He that teacheth, on teaching, &c.*

Neophytus. Upon what you have said, I humbly desire to be informed wherein *Pastor* and *Teacher* differ?

Philalethes. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and *Pastors and*
 "there are differences of administrations, *Teachers*
 "but the same Lord.—For to one is *wherein*
 "given, by the Spirit, the word of *wis-* *they differ?*
 "dom; to another, the word of *know-*
 "ledge, by the same Spirit."—Our ascended Lord divides to every man severally, by his Spirit, as he will. Some *excel* in one gift, some in another, but no man upon earth excels in them *all*: Some with *wis-*
dom open, explain, and urge all our evangelical duties; and some with abundant *knowledge* explain the great doctrines of faith: The churches of Christ in their choice should observe how their Lord goes *before* them, and points out to them the persons and their gifts; and seek for their *Paster*, him that abounds in preaching their duties to them *evangelically*, and for their *Teacher*, him that opens the great doctrines of the gospel *practically*; and then expect each to work, *without confinement*, according as they obtain help from God.

F 2

Neophytus.

It is granted that all who had ability might teach, and probably *did*, in the primitive churches: So they might all prophesy one by one, (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.) and all who prophesied taught: Yet from thence they were not denominated *Teachers*; for *these* are numbered among the Officers Christ had *set* in the church, or formally appointed. Again, he who is chosen to be a *Teacher*, may at the same time be chosen a *Teaching Elder*, which qualifies him for the discharge of the whole *ministerial* work.

Neophytus. I must own there appears a Glory upon this: But why don't the churches choose Pastors and Teachers as at the beginning?

Theophilus. It behoves the churches themselves to consider it.

Neophytus. But suppose the church be but small, may not a Pastor *only* be thought sufficient?

Theophilus. As I said before, the Church must consider that; but though many churches make a *shift* without such an officer, they may be every way the poorer for it.

Christophilus. The glory of a christian congregation, worshipping their Redeemer, according to primitive simplicity and purity; attending to the joyful sound of him that *exhorteth*, and him that *teacheth*, according to the analogy of faith, is very great. There the care and tenderness of Christ, as the Prince of *Shepherds*, may be seen in the love and labour of a faithful *Pastor*; and his wisdom and pity as a *Teacher* sent from God, while the scriptures are expounded, and the great doctrines thereof explained, by a wise and able *Teaching Elder*. They *both* feed the flock, with milk or strong meat, as is requisite: They must be of the greatest use to each other in the Lord; but “woe to him that is alone when he falleth (by trials and discouragements) for he hath not another to help him up.”

Neophytus. Well, may we live to see this primitive glory upon the churches of Christ! — But *Ruling Elders* were also mentioned; pray favour me with some account of them.

Theophilus.

Theophilus. We must then observe that in a church of Christ there is *rule or government*.

The Redeemer is not the author of III. RULING
confusion, but of order. We read of ELDERS.

them that *rule well*: (n) He that *ruleth* Their appoint-
is commanded to do it with *diligence*; ment.

(o) and the rest are commanded to
obey them that have the *rule* over them, and submit
themselves. (p)

Christophilus. And with subjection of soul, and
comfort, do I always consider Christ
as Zion's King, Law-giver and Judge. Their autho-
The government is upon *his* shoulders; rity.

and though there are in his church,
those who are called Rulers and Governors, yet they
are but his *servants*. Whatever power they have, it
is but a *ministerial* one; if they despise or neglect
the power he gives them, or omit the proper exer-
cise thereof they *sin*; and if they take a power he does
not give, they *usurp* what is not their due; and such
acts of theirs are not only null and void, but sinful.

Philaletes. And it is, I hope, with evangelical
thankfulness of heart I often think on the honour
Christ puts upon a *congregational* church, in making
it the seat of power and rule. A number of poor
converted sinners have power to *embody*, as our be-
loved *Epenetus* told us they did at *Caerludd*; to open
its gates to *receive* members; to *shut out* the unruly;
to *call* any of their number to a regular trial of their
proper gifts; to *ordain* them, if approved of, to the
stated exercise of those gifts in a proper office; and

F 3

then

(n) 1 Tim. v. 15.

(o) Rom. xii. 8.

(p) Heb. xiii. 17.

then to *charge* those officers to see, that they fulfil the ministry they have received.

Neophytus. Then why cannot they do all *themselves*, without officers?

Phileathes. Because Christ, the only King of the church, gave them no such power. There is rule and government in the Church, as was observed; it is *Christ's*,—he makes the church the *seat* of it,—and empowers to choose proper officers to *execute* it:—But though they have power to organize themselves, they have *no power* to continue in an unorganized state: And though they have power to *choose* officers, they have no power to *reject* them at pleasure, without special *cause*: Their power is altogether *limited* by the revealed *will* of their King; and so is the power of their officers.

Theophilus. Right; and therefore the church is not the seat of *absolute* power and authority; nor is it the church, properly, that gives what power it pleases to this or the other officer, but *Christ* by the church.

Christophilus. Then those officers, though they are *Rulers*, are yet *servants*. It is the Execution of the authority of Christ in the church, that is committed to the *Elders*.

Philologus. None but *Elders* must rule in a church. Some of them are on other accounts called *Bishops*, *Pastors*, *Teachers*, *Ministers*, &c. but what belongs to them in point of *rule* they have only as *Elders*. Paul sent for the *Elders* of the church, and said, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock *over* which
" the

“ the Holy Ghost hath made you *Overseers*.” (q) So, under the old Testament, the *Rulers* of the church were constantly called its *Elders*.

Neophytus. I humbly desire to be informed, what work it is that Christ the King requires from those *Elders*, as they are called to *rule*?

Theophilus. Those who are called to *rule*, are not in the least to *lord* it over God’s heritage; for they are not Lords over *Their Work*, the faith of the people, but *helpers* of 1. *To watch* their joy; and the power they have *over the flock*, is not for destruction, but for edifi- &c.

cation: For, as *Rulers*, they are to *watch* diligently over the ways, walk and conversation of all the members of the church: To *see* that they behave blamelessly, and shine in a holy course of life, as lights in the world. And upon any observation they make, in this care over the flock, to *exhort*, *encourage*, *reprove*, or *admonish*, as the case may require.

Christophilus. And seeing there are many Corruptions remaining, even in the most godly upon earth, that tend to op- 2. *To prevent* pose the design of our dear Lord’s *differences and* great command, that his disciples should *promote love*, *dearly love* one another, and make them-

selves known to the world thereby; it is certainly the work of those *Elders*, to watch against all appearance of *differences* and *divisions* among the people under their care. *Love* may be soon, and insensibly cooled, but not so soon kindled. The usefulness of

F 4

it

it is unspeakable; and when it departs from a people, all is gone along with it; and nothing else can make up the loss. Wherefore, in my poor judgment, the Rule of the church doth *principally* consist in a strict observance of the law of *love*, with a prevention of all that is contrary thereunto.

Syllogisticus. And I think *reason*, as well as revelation, requires that those *Rulers* should
 3. *To excite to special duties.* stir up all the members of the church to *special* duties, according to their different *talents*: To see that every *relation* be filled up with the proper duties thereof; and every *spiritual gift* be put upon its proper exercise.

Theophilus. The order of a church very much depends on the *constant* attendance of
 4. *To inspect the publick assemblies.* those belonging thereto in the *publick assemblies*. In all ages it has been the manner of some "to forsake the assembling of themselves together," but always to the dishonour of *Christ*, and *their* great disadvantage. Churches have greatly suffered thereby; divisions, and decays of love, have sprung from this remissness; therefore the *Rulers* should watch *diligently* lest any such root of bitterness spring up, and thereby many be defiled, and hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (r) First *one* may grow remiss, and then *another*; first to one *degree*, and then to another; until the whole *lump* be infected.

Christophilus. But what do you think of the sick and afflicted? "Is there any *sick* among you? let him call for the
 5. *To visit the sick and afflicted.* "Elders of the church." And if he did not send, it is their especial duty

to go. The special relation they stand in, by divine institution, to the afflicted members of the church, lays them under an unavoidable obligation to offer all the service they are capable of: And many of the afflicted may be exposed to more than ordinary trials, which should be duly considered, and they pitied and assisted. —“ I was sick, and ye visited me, “ I was in prison and ye came unto me.” (s)

Philethes. And I must observe, that it belongs to them as *Elders* to advise with, and give directions unto the *Deacons* of the church, as to what concerns the making provision for its poor: And if the poor be multiplied among them, and providence bring them assistance from other churches, that relief is to be deposited with the *Elders*, and disposed of according to their advice. “ Then the Disciples, every man “ according to his ability, determined to send relief “ unto the brethren which dwelt in *Judea*, which “ also they did, and sent it to the *Elders* by the “ hands of *Barnabas* and *Saul*.” (t)

Theophilus. And I shall add, that it is certainly their duty to prepare every one that is to be brought into the church, and proposed there; that nothing crude and undigested, which may give occasion to vain janglings, may be introduced, but every thing decently and in order; they are to reason as becomes their character, and then act with the consent of the church.

Syllogisticus. And now I will take the liberty to observe, that seeing *Pastors* and *Teachers* are obliged

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(s) *Matt.* xxv, 36.

(t) *Acts* xi, 29, 30.

to give themselves to the preaching of the word and prayer, — who is the person that dares say, a Pastor *alone* is sufficient for all the above mentioned work? Where is the church in the new Testament that had but *one* Elder? *Paul* sent for the *Elders* of the church at *Ephesus*; (u) and *Elders* were *ordained* in every church; (w) and even where there is a Pastor and teaching Elder in a church, who attend respectively to their proper employ, all *reason* makes it necessary they should be assisted in the *ruling* part by proper officers, who are *not* called to give themselves to the word and prayer.*

Theophilus.

(u) *Acts* xx. 17.

(w) *Acts* xiv. 23.

* THAT there is such an officer, by divine institution, as a *Ruling Elder*, whose proper work is *only* to rule, is argued from the following passages. (Not to insist on *1 Cor.* xii. 28.—*Governments.*) *1. Rom.* xii. 6—8. — *He that ruleth with DILIGENCE.* The analytical account that must be given of the place requires what is here pleaded for. — The *whole work* of church officers is to be understood thus:

All church-office-work is either

1. Prophecy	} i. e.	1. Teaching	} Which belong respectively to	Teaching Elders
or		2. Exhortation.		Pastors.
2. Ministry	}	1. Rule,	}	Ruling Elders,
		2. Bounty.		Deacons.

2. *1 Tim.* v. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, ESPECIALLY those who labour in the word and doctrine.*

— Here are two sorts of Elders, those whose *principal* business is to labour in the word and doctrine, and those whose *proper* concern is to rule well. — The *former* are to give themselves to the word and prayer, — reading, exhortation and doctrine. — “to me-
“ditate on these things, and give themselves wholly to them.”
(*1 Tim.* iv. 13. 15.) The *latter* to rule well, and with diligence, though they labour not in the word and doctrine. — Will any object, “that these Elders were *Bishops*, in the *English* sense
“ of

Theophilus. I am abundantly satisfied that there should be a *Presbytery*, a competent number of *Elders* in every church. There was no such thing from the beginning, as churches with one Elder a piece; and I am persuaded when the primitive glory is restored, the churches will have their *Elderships* as at the beginning. Oh, how beautiful must it be to see a godly *Pastor*, and a sound able *Teaching Elder*, strengthening each other's hands, labouring in the word and doctrine; assisted in the *ruling part*, which requires great *diligence*, by able and faithful *Ruling Elders*, constantly attending to their proper work! And if their temporal circumstances will not allow them to spend so much time as the work requires, without *assistance*, then assistance is their due, if they *rule well*, even to a double honour; for "thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn."

Christophilus. I think all who love the Lord *Jesus Christ* should earnestly pray for the return of that primitive simplicity and glory. Christ is greatly honoured in the beautiful *order* of his house; Con-

F 6

formity

"of the word, or persons of an order superior to common ministers," and not engaged in ministerial labours? Be it so; the consequence is evident, *viz.* That *unpreaching Prelates* (to use *Latimer's* expression) are worthy of *Christ's* honour (*respect* and *maintenance*) than their faithful and laborious clergy. See *Doddridge* and *Calvin* in loco.

But, notwithstanding what has been said, and however *desirable* such *ruling Elders* may be in *large* congregations,—it must be allowed, that some Christian Societies are so small as to render them *less necessary*. Not to say that there are some churches so circumstanced as not to possess such valuable persons as would be likely to fill the Office in an honourable and useful manner; and to invest others with such power, would not answer the end proposed.

formity to *his* appointments, and that *alone* is beautiful. How *beautiful* a sight is a church of Christ, met in his presence, with their *Elders* among them, all having their eyes to their King in the midst of them, and doing all things in obedience to *him*! No sight so glorious upon earth!

Theophilus. And while we are earnestly breathing after the return of such glory to the churches, may we be helped to bless God that we have able and godly *Pastors* in them: And seeing their work is very great—and they have no *fellow-Elders* to help them,—may their respective flocks be helped constantly to *pray* for them; to make their work as easy as possible, avoiding all occasions of grief and discouragement; to teach and admonish one another in *love*, remembering that the *Pastor* must give himself to the word and prayer. That thoughtless person who makes light of grieving, despising and discouraging his Pastor, knows not what he does. Better a mill-stone was hanged about his neck,—whatever he may think of himself,—and he cast into the sea; as the great Bishop of our souls assures us. (x) The eternal Spirit be the help and comfort of *Pastors* and *Churches*!

Neophytus. My dear Fathers, Brethren, and Friends, I heartily join with you in breathing after such a glory as you mentioned; and, I hope, earnestly desire that in mean time, all *godly Pastors* may be greatly encouraged and blessed, and their people filled with wisdom, holiness, peace, fervent love to each other, constant prayer for their Pastor, and due christian-respect and submission to him in the Lord,—Now, if you

(x) Luke xvii, 2.

you please, a few words about *Deacons*, though I am not much at a loss concerning them.

Theophilus. Unto the office of *Deacons* belongs the actual exercise and application of the bounty and benevolence of IV. *DEACONS* the members of the church, unto *Their Office*. the *poor* that are planted therein. 1. *Care of the* Under the present dispensation, the *poor*. the church must have the *poor* “ always “ with them;” and according to the laws of Christ, and even the light of nature, it is a duty and a blessing to *relieve* them: And unto this the *Deacons* are to excite and direct the members of the church; *receive* for, and faithfully *distribute* to the poor, as their various cases and circumstances may require. The care of this is also incumbent on the Elders, but the *Deacons* are *helps* to them.

Philalethes. Their Qualifications are recorded; 1 *Tim.* iii. 8—13. Care and prudence in the choice of them are recommended, and they encouraged to faithfulness and diligence: Hereby a great trust in them will be reposed, and they shall attain a great degree of freedom.

Christophilus. Our dear Redeemer has by many ways discovered his love to, and care of the *poor of the flock*. That they might not be discouraged, here is not only the care of them incumbent on Pastors, Teachers and Elders, but here is an office instituted on very purpose for them: And, doubtless, the *Deacons* should look upon it as a special part of their *glory*, that they are called to *represent* and shew forth the care, love, tenderness and compassion of Christ.

Syllogisticus.

Syllogisticus. And therefore they should inform themselves of the circumstances of the poor; acquaint the church with their necessity; stir up the particular members to a free contribution, according as God hath prospered them; reprove the negligent, and if they persist in a neglect of their duty, then acquaint the Elders, seek and take their advice; and in every thing they receive or distribute, stand always in a readiness to be accountable.

Neophytus. But *Deacons* have generally upon their hands, besides the care of the poor, what concerns the Lord's table, and the maintenance of the ministry.

Philaletes. That work is theirs, because their proper business is to serve tables:
2. To serve Therefore, to the table of the poor tables. have justly been added the table of the Lord, and the minister's table.

Neophytus. I shall at present move no more questions: I thank all my friends that spoke for their trouble, and you, Father *Epenetus*, for your patience.

Epenetus. Patience! it has been a pleasure to me. I told you what persons they nominated at *Caen-ludd* for their officers, and was going to tell you that quickly after then, *Dewi* found a strong inclination to visit *Hyfrydle*, the place of his spiritual birth; and upon his mentioning this, two of the persons nominated for *Deacons* offered to bear him company. They all set out together, and, arriving at *Hyfrydle*, were received with the greatest demonstrations of christian joy. The house of *Buddiol* (the gracious landlord) was presently filled; the conversation and attention very singular, and the workings of affection strong. Christianity was their glory, and there
was

was every thing that became it. At supper, *Dewi* put the landlord in mind of the *feast* they had when they supped there together before; which renewed a discourse of the same kind, in which *Efyddlon* bore his part with great enlargement and affection. After supper, the 133d *Psalm* was read, explained and sung, and *Efyddlon* prayed; — took his leave of his friends in the tenderest love, — wished them a good night, — and told them he hoped they should both see and hear his dear brother *Cywir* the Teacher the next day.

Theophilus. Then I suppose the next day was the *Lord's Day*, when the church was to meet for publick worship.

Epenetus. It was so. But Oh! how glad was *Cywir* to see any of those christians of *Catrhudd*, of whom he had heard so much. He embraced them, and could have kissed the very ground whereon they stood; and, with a countenance that discovered greater love in his heart than could be expressed in words, and tears of joy, encouraged them in the Lord. And unspeakably glad were they to see another of the preaching servants of the Lord; and the more so, because they thought, by his name, that he was the person that so encouraged and helped *Efyddlon* at his first conversion. They asked *Efyddlon* if he was not the same man? He answered, yes; and, said he, we contracted such a friendship then, that, if possible, we were resolved to strengthen the hands of each other, in Christ and his work, till death.

In the forenoon *Cywir* preached from *Psalm* lxxii. 16. *There shall be an handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake*

Shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. — The great design of his discourse was to shew the wonders of divine grace and power, in planting and strengthening the kingdom of the Redeemer, in the country and city: — The deep designs of love, and the effectual operations of the eternal Spirit, he insisted much upon; — with the promise of mighty increase from small beginnings. In hearing, Dewi and his brethren were filled with joy. And so they were in the afternoon, when Ffyddlon preached from *Eph. v. 1. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.* In the evening there was a meeting of Prayer, and when one brother or two had prayed, Dewi was desired to give some account of the State of Christ's cause at *Caerludd*, which he did; and began from that very spot, where God began with *Yefan* and himself, in as particular a manner as he conveniently could: — But it would affect a person so much as to think how the assembly heard him. What tears of joy were there! A weight of joy which they could hardly bear! Even children present were amazed, and many of them converted; and, for many years after, could relate the pleasing story to their children, and their children's children. — They sung a *Psalms*, and Dewi was desired to conclude in prayer; — which he did with an enlarged heart.

Christophilus. Oh! what precious days can our Lord cause his children to see! My soul longs for such warming seasons! Well, the residue of the Spirit is with him: He can make our cup to run over. Excuse me.

Eugenius

Epenetus. There they staid all that week, constantly employed in, and entertained with what concerned the kingdom of Christ and his worship. *Cywir* was with them most part of the time; and a meeting being that week at the village where he lived, they went thither also. The following Lord's day, the *Teacher* preached; and the *Pastor*, in the afternoon, administered the *Lord's supper*. *Dewi* and his two friends were invited to partake with them, which they did; and the *Love* of the Lamb of God, in the midst of the throne, was to them exceeding precious. They were greatly edified and strengthened; and in the evening of that day the godly, with many prayers and tears, committed *Dewi* and his companions to the Grace of God; and also their own *Messengers*, who were now to accompany them to the city; for the *fixed* days were at hand.

Neophytus. Now, dear *Epenetus*, I long to have a particular account of the *Ordination*; and how it was managed?

Epenetus. You may depend upon it, *Neophytus*, that in *primitive* Ordinations there was nothing pompous nor frivolous; every thing then answered the simplicity and power of the Gospel.—They set out for *Caerludd* together, and comfortable was their journey: Some encouraging circumstances by the way I omit. They arrived at *Caerludd* no sooner than welcome. The christians flocked about them, and they worshipped God together: And *Cywir*, that very evening, preached from *Acts* xviii. 10. *I have much people in this city.* The 72d *Psalms* was sung, and the people dismissed. Their hearts were all filled with joy;—God made them glad through his work.

Yefan.

Kefan rejoiced greatly, and his poor wife was helped, in a good measure, to shake off her heavy fetters, and her steps were enlarged. *Cynwir* lodged at *their* house, and *Ffyddlon* at *Deui's*; the other Messengers in different families: They would not suffer them to be two in a house; they wished there were more of them, that they might have one each: They all covered them, and prevailed upon them sometimes to shift lodgings; but those who experience of *christian love* cannot blame them.

Theophilus. You said the time fixed for Ordination was at hand; pray how did they employ themselves in the mean while?

Epenetus. They had but one day; and that was taken up in prayer, conference and advice:—and things preparatory were fixed, that they might proceed in good order the following day.

THE church met betimes; and, after praying that their ascended Redeemer would guide them in their great work, and fill the day with his presence, and make it a blessing to late posterity;—they chose a godly brother of good understanding, one *Diffuant*, to be their mouth to speak for them what was needful in their solemn work. The Messengers from *Hyfrydle* had a seat by themselves;—and *Ffyddlon* stood up and said,—“Dear Brethren, upon your request we are come as Messengers from the church of Christ at *Hyfrydle*, whose dear love and tender affection we were desired to deliver to you, together with this Letter; which we desire your delegate, *Diffuant*, to read.

He

He took it and read as follows:

"The church of Christ sojourning at Hyfrydle, unto
 "the church of Christ sojourning at Caerludd,
 "wishing all grace and peace.

"DEAR AND BELOVED BRETHREN,

"IT is impossible for us to express with what
 "joy your Letter was read and heard among us!
 "We have blessed our God for you, and continu-
 "ally seek his face, — that you may daily have,
 "clearly know, and greatly triumph in the joyful
 "sound; — that your faith in Christ — the faith that
 "worketh by love, attended with gospel obedience
 "— may eminently flourish; — that brotherly love may
 "be constant and fervent; — that your increase may
 "be great, so that many evangelical churches may
 "spring forth from you! Let the people praise thee,
 "O Lord! Let all the people praise thee!

"ACCORDING to your request we have sent our
 "Messengers, our much honoured and beloved Bishops,
 "Ffyddlon and Cytwir; and our dear brethren, Buddiol
 "and Tostyriol. Receive them in the Lord. All
 "grace and peace be with you; — the sincere and
 "fervent wish of your affectionate brethren in the
 "Lord. — Ordered at our church meeting, &c."

Diffiant: "Fathers and Brethren, I do in the
 "name of this church of Christ, thankfully ac-
 "knowledge the tender love and regard of the
 "church at Hyfrydle, and with sincerest affection
 "and joy receive you as their Messengers; and hope
 "we shall always look upon the Messengers of the
 "churches as the glory of Christ. (2 Cor. viii. 23.)

Christophilus.

Christophilus. Really this entrance seems beautiful, and there appears a greater solemnity upon it than on all the pomp and grandeur of man's invention.

Epenetus. Then *Diffuant*, with an audible voice, distinctly read their *confession of faith*—the church standing all the while,—and then their *covenant*: At the conclusion of which, they lift up their right hands to heaven—their zeal (without being asked) putting them thereupon—and so sat down.—Then their delegated brother spoke to them as follows:

Diffuant. “Brethren, we are through amazing
“ grace a church of Christ, though we so lately
“ wandered in the darkness of heathenism. It is
“ the Lord's work, and marvelous in our eyes. The
“ ascended Saviour, the great Shepherd, hath us
“ under his care as his *flock*, and does not disdain
“ to gather our *lambs* in his arms. To our *First-*
“ *Fruits* he has been pleased to impart gifts, the
“ great usefulness of which we have plentifully ex-
“ perienced. He empowers us to choose in his
“ name whom we judge fitted by himself to feed
“ his sheep,—to feed his lambs. We have as a church
“ in the presence of Christ, the great Bishop of our
“ souls, nominated and called our beloved brethren
“ *Deowi* and *Yefan* to become our Overseers in the
“ Lord. Their answers were humble and encour-
“ aging:—And now, brethren, (that we may
“ take each of them apart)—if you do as a church
“ of Christ, renew your call to our dear and much
“ honoured *Deowi* to be your *Paster*—to perform
“ all the duties and labour of such an office, as
“ held forth in the *law*s of our Lord;—and if
“ upon his compliance with your call, and his ac-
“ tual

“ tual separation to the good work, you promise
“ all *christian love*, respect and obedience to him in
“ the Lord, — signify it by lifting up your hands:”
—— *Which they unanimously did.*

THEN turning to *Dewi*, he said, “ Our beloved
“ Brother, you see, that, with submission to the
“ Lord, the eyes of the church are upon you, and
“ they do *unanimously* call you to take the *pastoral*
“ care of them, — and on compliance with this call,
“ think to proceed immediately to your *Ordina-*
“ *tion*: — Dear Sir, we only wait for your answer.

Dewi. “ I am the Lord’s; I am yours: And
“ whatever gifts I have are yours. I know I am
“ insufficient; but, through grace, I have some
“ knowledge of the great *Pastor*, in whom all ful-
“ nefs dwells. Casting myself at his feet who has
“ said, *My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is*
“ *made perfect in weakness*; — I accept of your call,
“ and shall in the strength of the Lord apply myself
“ to my work, when set apart thereunto; but earnestly
“ begging your constant and fervent *prayers* for me.”

WHEREUPON the whole church bowed their heads
with tears of joy; and *Diffuant* said, “ Brethren,
“ if you do as a church of Christ, and in *his* name,
“ now solemnly and actually set apart and *ordain*
“ our beloved brother *Dewi* to the work and office
“ of a *Pastor*, signify it by lifting up your hands:” —
Which they unanimously did. Upon this, *Dewi*, with
many tears, said, — *Send now prosperity, O Lord!*

THEN said *Diffuant* to the church, “ Brethren, our
“ Lord Jesus is our great *Pastor* and Teacher; none
“ teacheth like him: He hath declared his Father’s
“ name unto us, and will declare it. Great are
“ the

“ the mysteries of love and grace ! Oh, the depth
 “ of the promises ! Some part we have seen, and
 “ great things we trust still to receive. — The la-
 “ bours of our dear brother *Yefan*, upon the great
 “ doctrines of God’s everlasting love, the *person* of
 “ Christ, the *covenant* of grace, *justification* through
 “ Christ, and in him *sanctification*, *perseverance* and
 “ *glory* have been precious to us. We have esteemed
 “ him a sincere and affectionate *Teacher* ; we bless
 “ God for him, and own that we stand in great
 “ need of his labours : Wherefore, Brethren, if you
 “ do now renew the call to our beloved brother
 “ *Yefan*—statedly to explain the great doctrines of the
 “ gospel to you, for faith and practice, in the office
 “ of a *Teaching Elder* ;—and if on compliance with
 “ your call, and actual separation to his work, you
 “ promise all christian regard to him, and *submission*
 “ in the Lord, — then signify it by lifting up
 “ your hands : ” — *Which they unanimously did.*

THEN, turning to *Yefan*, he said, “ Our beloved
 “ brother, you see how, with submission to their great
 “ prophet, the church unanimously call you to be
 “ their *Teacher* — to explain the scriptures, open the
 “ great doctrines of salvation, and instruct them for
 “ their comfort and holiness ; — and, with their new-
 “ ly chosen *Pastor*, to take the over-sight of them in
 “ the Lord, — Dear Sir, your answer is desired.”

Yefan. “ I stand in great need of instruction ; but
 “ whatever understanding is given, or may be given
 “ me, I am very willing to employ it among you
 “ to the honour of Christ, and our mutual advan-
 “ tage. I beg your constant prayers for me.”

WHERE-

WHERRUPON the whole church bowed their heads as before; and *Diffuant* said, “Brethren, if you do, as a church of Christ, and in his name, now solemnly and actually set apart and *ordain* our beloved brother *Yefan*, to the office and work of a *Teaching Elder*, promising, in the strength of Christ, all tender regard and due submission to him in the Lord; signify it by lifting up your hands:”—*Which they unanimously did.*

UPON this, *Yefan*, in the most affectionate manner, and with many tears, said,—*Uphold me, O Lord! with thy free spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee!*

THEN *Diffuant* read the 23d Psalm, and the whole congregation sung it under holy enlargements with a loud voice; for God had made them very glad.—Then *Diffuant* prayed with great affection, suitably to the occasion; and with a cheerful countenance spoke to the church:—“Brethren, God has graciously given us a *Pastor* after his own heart, and our eyes see our *Teacher*: The eternal God be with them and us!” And upon that, bowed his head, and came down to a lower seat.

THEN stands up *Cywir*, one of the messengers, and says,—“Brethren, your *faith* we own to be the faith of Christ, and your *order*, that of the gospel; we shall, if the Lord will, present the account of both to the church we belong to; and now, as their messengers, and in their name, we with you abundant success and comfort, and give you the right hand of fellowship.”—The newly ordained *Pastor* and *Teacher*, in the next seat, received

ceived that christian token of communion in the most loving manner.

THEN *Ffyddlon* prayed, — and afterwards preached from *Acts* xx. 28. *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers (ἐπισκοπους), to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* — After him *Cywir* prayed, and then preached from *1 Theff.* y. 12, 13. *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake; and be at peace among yourselves.* — Then was sung the 87th Psalm, and *Dewi* concluded that day's publick work with prayer.

Theophilus. We thank you, beloved *Epenetus*, for the account of this beautiful work. May we see this glory upon all the churches!

Neophytus. I own the work had a great deal of christian solemnity upon it, but was not imposition of hands wanting? *Paul* and *Barnabas* had hands laid on them. (y)

Theophilus. Right: *Extraordinary* Officers already; — now sent on an *extraordinary* Errand; — and to receive extraordinary gifts and abilities for it.

Neophytus. But *Timothy* had the hands of a *Presbytery* laid on him. (z)

Theophilus. True; an *extraordinary* Presbytery, for *Paul* was one of them; — and *Timothy*, as an *Evangelist*, received extraordinary gifts thereby.

Neophytus:

(y) *Acts* xiii. 3.

(z) *1 Tim.* iv. 14.

Neophytus. But Paul says to Timothy, lay hands suddenly on no man. (a)

Theophilus. At first the saints enjoyed frequently the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost by the *laying on of hands*; but by *that* time there were many thousands of christians for whom such blessings were not designed. Some of the servants of God, it is very probable, too suddenly laid on hands, and the expected extraordinary gifts did not follow; therefore the Apostle cautions Timothy against the sinful presumption, and advises that he *wait* for infallible assurances from the Holy Ghost, that such gifts were to follow.*

Neophytus. Pray how did they ordain ordinary officers in the first churches, to preach and rule?

Theophilus. By *lifting up of hands* were ordinary Elders ordained in every church. (b) †

G

Neophytus.

(a) 2 Tim. v. 22.

* In most of our modern congregational ordinations, it is customary for the assisting ministers (or *presbyters*) to lay hands on the head of the candidate; but, I believe, the audience is generally informed on the occasion, that hereby they claim no pretence of *conferring* gifts or graces, and form no presumptuous expectations of extraordinary influences, much less *miraculous* endowments; — but rather consider the ordination completed by the *suffrage of the people*, while they in prayer over the candidate, would be understood only to single him out (just at that part of the prayer which more immediately refers to his being set apart for the pastoral care) with greater distinctness and solemnity. — Some, however, and our author in particular, think it best to avoid, on these occasions, all *appearance* of extraordinary authority.

(b) Acts xiv. 23.

† The text here referred to, is thus paraphrased by Dr. Doddridge; — “ And when they had by the concurrent suffrage
of

Neophytus. Excuse me, dear *Epenetus*, and proceed to the next day's work.

Epenetus. The next day the church met betimes, blessed God for the past day, earnestly desired the Lord to be greatly with, and eminently to bless their *Pastor* and *Teacher*, and begged his presence with them that day;—then *Derwi*, the *Pastor*, speaks to the church, (for now there was no need of a *delegated* brother to speak)—“Brethren, we are sensible
“that the whole work of watching over the flock
“is very great, as you have heard very particularly
“from the pulpit yesterday;—we know we are weak
“and insufficient for the same; but we have reason
“to be very thankful, that our Lord has appointed
“for

of the people constituted presbyters for them in every church,”—And (as he observes in a note) Mr. Harrington renders the words *Χριστοπολιτὰς αὐτοῖς προσέειλεν*, ordained them elders by the votes of the people; which rendering he has endeavoured largely to vindicate from the exceptions of Dr. Hammond, &c. *Raphelius* has confirmed the same interpretation. And the old english bible translates it, when they had ordained them elders by election. It is worthy of notice, that the civil government of these places was in a great measure popular; and the apostles well knew how expressly the consent of the Jewish people had been taken in the settlement of their civil and ecclesiastical affairs. Sir Norton Knatchbull has an admirable note on the place, in which he establishes the version first mentioned, by many incontestible authorities. And though it be true that in some cases the word *Χριστοπολιτὰς* signifies to constitute or appoint to an office where there could be no voting, there appears no evidence that the word is so to be interpreted here. (See *Doddridge's Fam. Expos.* in loco.)—It may be also remarked, that among the Greeks, particularly at Athens, some of the magistrates were called *Χριστοπολιτῶν*; because they were elected to their office by the lifting up the hands of the people, (See *Potter's Antiquities of Greece*, B. i. chap. xi.)

“ for his churches those, whose *proper business* it is
“ to rule well and with *diligence*. — We have already,
“ as a church, fixed upon brother *Didwyll* and
“ brother *Diwyd* as proper persons for that office:
“ We gave them a solemn call thereunto, to which
“ their answer was such as we desired: And now,
“ Brethren, if you do, as a church, renew your call
“ to each as a *Ruling Elder* — promising them all
“ christian regard and *submission in the Lord* — signify
“ it by lifting up your hands:” — *Which they unanimously did.*

Then said *Dewi* to *Didwyll* and *Diwyd*, — “ Brethren, you see how, thro’ mercy, the church is willing to be ruled and governed, according to the *laws of Christ*. They have taken *his yoke* upon them, and, with their eyes to him, they earnestly desire you both to become their *Ruling Elders*; — your answer is desired that we may proceed.” They both stood up, and answered to this effect; — That they were *willing*, according to the best of their capacity, to serve Christ and his interest in that church: And tho’ the work was very weighty, yet, in submission to Christ, and the call of the church, they would not refuse the work, when set apart for it.

Dewi. “ Brethren, if you do as a church of Christ, and in his name, now solemnly and *actually* set apart brother *Didwyll*, and brother *Diwyd*, to the aforementioned Office, signify it by lifting up your hands:” — *Which they unanimously did.*

Then said *Didwyll*, “ Brethren, Pray for us. — The Government is on the shoulders of the Redeemer

“deemer, therefore in his strength we willingly
 “undertake the work.” — And *Dewi*, with great
 affection, said, — “My heart is towards the gover-
 “nors of *Israel*, that offered themselves willingly
 “among the people; bless ye the Lord.” (c)

THEN *Yefan* stood up, and spoke to the church
 as follows: — “Brethren, the compassions of our
 “Redeemer are very great; the poor are evange-
 “lized, and he tells us, he would leave in the midst
 “of us an *afflicted and poor people*, (d) whom his
 “church, in a special manner, is bound to regard
 “and assist. *Deacons* are officers in the church,
 “whose proper business it is to promote their relief.
 “You have, as a church of Christ, solemnly called
 “brother *Dysal*, *Llawen*, *Tirion* and *Haelionus*, to
 “be your *Deacons*; and if you now renew that call,
 “signify it by lifting up your hands:” — Which
 they unanimously did. — Then he desired the several
 brethren to give in their answer, that they might
 proceed to ordination. They replied, that they were
 willing to serve Christ, the church, and the poor,
 in the Office of *Deacons*, if the church thought fit to
 set them apart thereunto.

Yefan. “Brethren, if you do, as a church of Christ,
 “and in his name, now actually set apart the
 “brethren, *Dysal*, *Llawen*, *Tirion*, and *Haelionus*,
 “each to the aforementioned office of a *Deacon* —
 “promising due respect and christian regard to them
 “as such — signify it by lifting up your hands:” —
 Which they unanimously did. And the *Deacons* earnestly
 desired

(c) Judges v. 9.

(d) Zeph. iii. 12.

desired prayers, that they might faithfully discharge the trust reposed in them.

THEN the 146th *Psal*m was sung; and *Yefan* prayed with great judgment and affection; and immediately *Cywir* preached from 1 *Tim.* v. 17. *The Elders that rule well, count worthy of double honour.* He insisted much on the duty of Elders and people. — Then *Ffyddlon* prayed, and preached from *Rom.* xii. 7, 8. *Or ministry, let us wait on our ministring; — he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; — he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.* The 26th *Psal*m was sung, and *Yefan* concluded with prayer. Great was the joy of the church, and great grace was upon them all.

Christophilus. Thus we see the first christian church in *Caerludd* was organized, and great was their beauty; — Now, dear *Epenetus*, let us hear how they went on.

Epenetus. At a convenient season I shall endeavour to entertain you therewith, but, at present, our respective families want us.

D I A L O G U E IV.

Now members were admitted. An instance of a believer baptized. An Infant baptized. A converted Heathen speaks his experience. A converted Jew also. Both received. The Lord's supper administered. The messengers depart. At Caerludd they provide for their bishops. Resolve upon a christian school. Edgar, the master, ordained a catechist. Private meetings agreed upon. The number of believers great. A separation into several churches proposed, and rejected. But in another way gained. The order thereof.

THEOPHILUS.

DEAR *Christophilus*, how many teachers and instructors continually attend us! It may be well said, indeed, that God hath not left himself without witness. The *Heavens* declare his glory, and the firmament sheweth his handy work: Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. (e) The sun, moon and stars, which our Lord has ordained, offer instruction; *Arcturus*, *Orion* and *Pleiades*, and the chambers of the south, proclaim his greatness.

Christophilus.

(e) *Psa.* xix. 1, 2.

Christophilus. Not only do the Heavens declare his wonders, but our teachers come to our very doors; ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee, and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. The stone out of the wall speaks, and the beam out of the timber answers it: Not an admired nor a despised flower in garden or field, but what preaches divine power and wisdom; and every spire of grass stands up for its maker, as well as the lofty cedars in *Lebanon*. There is not an *atom* but powerfully pleads for God.

Theophilus. Our grove and spreading Oak furnish us with humbling thoughts. Do you hear the singing of birds? Though their portion be small, yet, in their way they praise him that formed and feeds them. Though our God giveth unto us all things richly to enjoy, how backward are our hearts to divine praises! — But here are *Epenetus* and *Neophytus*: I hope the pleasing story will cause our hearts yet to burn.

Neophytus. So, friends and neighbours, your eagerness to hear the story, brought you hither betimes.

Theophilus. We were observing how our little teachers, that sing among the branches, chide our backwardness to praise our Redeemer. — Now, *Epenetus*, for the pleasing account.

Epenetus. The very next day after the ordination of their Elders and Deacons, was their christian sabbath, or the Lord's day: And because *Ffyddlon* and *Cywir* had preached two days successively already, *Yefan* and *Dewi* undertook the principal work of this. *Yefan* preached in the forenoon, from *Eph. iii. 8.* Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is

this grace given, that I should preach among the gentiles the unspeakable riches of Christ.— Dewi preached in the afternoon, from 2 Cor. iv. 5. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake.—God was greatly with them both, and with the whole church, and by his Spirit made their cup to run over. The messengers also were filled with joy; and Efyddlon proposed preaching to them that evening. They were glad to hear it, (for the Gospel was more precious to them than their necessary food) and accordingly he preached unto them an excellent sermon from Acts viii. 8. *And there was great joy in that city.*

Neophytus. I thought, *Theophilus*, from what you said, we should hear of the singing of birds—the birds of *Paradise*: God had done great things for them whereof they were glad: I wish *Great Britain* were filled with such melody!—But I have hindered you.

Epenetus. The following Lord's day the church was to partake of the Lord's supper; and they had fixed upon the fifth day of this week for solemn prayer before God, that he would graciously prepare and dispose their hearts evangelically to attend upon him in that precious ordinance.—Some also who had been propounded for communion, were then to give in the account of their faith and experiences; and some stood ready for baptism.

Theophilus. Then I see, that to propound in order to fellowship, is a very ancient custom in the churches.

Epenetus. Yes, to be sure, and great was the care of the primitive churches this way. They used great caution, and often persons stood a long time in the state.

state of *catechumens*: And this young church thought it expedient they should act with deliberation, and get as much acquaintance as possible with the person who offered himself to fellowship.

Christophilus. And, pray, what were those cautious steps they took, in order to preserve themselves pure?

Epenetus. They might vary as the case required; but, in general, it was thus: The person who offered himself was examined by the *Elders*; and, if they saw encouragement, they informed the church that such a person desired communion with them in the Lord's institutions and ordinances, as a church member: The church then deputed two or more persons in their name, to visit this person so offering himself,—to discourse closely with him, upon what he knew, believed and experienced,—to pray with, instruct and encourage him, as they thought needful;—to make all the enquiry they could about his conversation and behaviour, more especially *that* from the time of his first concern about his soul,—and to make report of all to the church at a convenient season.

Theophilus. I should be glad if you please to favour us with an instance, after what manner they received members.

Neophytus. *Epenetus* having told us of some that were ready for baptism; may we be first favoured with an example or two, for instruction, in what concerns that ordinance?

Epenetus. The very next day after *Yefan* and *Denni* preached, there came a person to *Yefan's* house, whose name was *Credadyn*, humbly asking for *Yefan*, and with tears spoke to him as follows.—“ Being

“ accidentally to hear you yesterday, what you said
“ entered my heart; and though my coming was
“ to satisfy a vain, curious mind, the great God,
“ as I verily believe, opened my heart: While you
“ were speaking of the unsearchable riches of grace
“ to the chief of sinners, I hope I saw my wound
“ and my relief.”

Yefan. It is not long since I met with the same mercy, and I am glad to see the same grace apprehending others: I would be also thankful that the God of all grace has been pleased to own my poor ministry for the good of any of my fellow sinners; and that he does already lead you to hope.

Credadyn. I am very sensible that I was without hope, though unconcerned; but, I am ashamed and confounded to think of it, I neither knew nor desired a deliverer.

Yefan. Do you think you know and desire him now?

Credadyn. I hope I do; the whole city; the whole world cannot save me; but there is one greater than the world, who is above all, and who can save to the uttermost; at his feet I cast myself for salvation; I believe there is salvation in none but in Jesus Christ.

Yefan. And what makes you believe it is in him?

Credadyn. The divine, almighty power makes me believe it, by giving me to see that Christ is a fit Saviour for such as I am; and in making me willing to cast my soul upon him.

Yefan. But what would you have me do for you?

Credadyn. I renounce Heathenism, profess myself a Christian, and desire to be baptized.

UPON

UPON this *Yefan* ordered *water*, prayed in an affectionate and suitable manner, and then observed to what company was present, — the wonders of grace in visiting the poor Gentiles, who thereupon were flocking to Jesus, professing faith in him, and desiring to be baptized in his name: He also observed, that this was the faithful performance of gracious promises; particularly that in *Isaiah* lii. 15. *So shall he sprinkle many nations*; — which, he said, our Lord directly referred to in *Matt.* xxviii. 19. *Go teach all nations baptizing them, &c.* * He then took water and sprinkled it on his face, saying, “*Credadyn*, I baptize thee in the name of the Father” and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” — He concluded with praying, that the blessing of Heaven might attend the ordinance, — that God would give them an enlarged acquaintance with his promise of sprinkling clean water upon them, baptizing them

G 6

with.

* WHETHER the text in *Matthew* has any reference to that in *Isaiah*, in the sense here intended, I shall leave to the judgment of the judicious reader; but as to the *mode* of baptism (though Mr. *Morrice* went so far as to contend, that immersion was never used in the Apostolick age) it should seem an equitable rule, that — as the most eminent critics, commentators and lexicographers are divided in their verdict, respecting the acceptation of the term *Baptizo*, and consequently the intention of our Saviour’s command to baptize; and as the *practice* of the disciples, whence we should gather in what sense they understood it, is attended with considerable difficulty, when reduced to any one *invariable* method — we should vary it according to circumstances, and in proportion as demonstrable evidence is wanting, refer the mode to the *private judgment* of the person or persons concerned. Hereby Ministers would discover a liberal impartiality, and shew that they are ever willing to embrace superior evidence,

with the Holy Spirit;—carry them on into greater degrees of holiness to the Lord, and establishment in the faith;—and, particularly, that the newly baptized person might be enabled all his days to walk worthy of the profession he now made, and of that blessed name whereinto he was now baptized.—Then he encouraged and directed him to follow the Lord fully.

Neophytus. Were none baptized then, but those who thus desired it?

Epenetus. Infants were then baptized; and the same day will furnish us with an instance of this kind. One *Graslawyn*, who was baptized by *Ffyddlon* when he was there before, by this time had a child: He goes to *Dewi*, now his Pastor, and desires him to come to his house, to baptize it.—*Dewi*, being at leisure, immediately went, and some friends present went along with him. When they came, *Dewi* ordered water to be ready, and went to prayer. Then he gave his small auditory a short, yet sweet discourse, from *Jer. xxx. 20. Their Children also shall be as aforetime.*—And when he had done, he turned to the father of the child, and said, “Brother, I hope you will always look upon yourself under the strongest obligations to bring up your child (if spared) in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,—to plead with God for him, and plead with him for God.”

Graslawyn. In the strength of Christ I promise this.

Dewi. What is your child’s name?

Graslawyn. His name is *Nathanael*.

Dewi. This child, named *Nathanael*, “I baptize
“in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the
“Holy

"Holy Spirit."—And while he spoke the words, he poured the water on the child's face,—then gave the child unto the father;—and prayed that the glorious Prince, who stands up for the children of his people, would graciously bless the child,—bring it up for himself, that it might appear to be the gift of God indeed,—that the parents might be enabled to discharge all duties towards their child,—and that they and the church of God might have very early comfort in him.—He then expressed thankfulness for tender mercies to both the parents respectively, and earnestly desired that the God of the families of *Israel* would make his constant abode with them; and so concluded that service.

Neophytus. To me there appears a great deal of glory upon this. Oh! it grieves me that any of the churches of Christ should lose any part of it.

Epenetus. "Oh, thou that art named the house of *Jacob*, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Are these his doings?—From their *Children* have ye taken away my glory for ever." (f)

Theophilus. But I hope, dear *Epenetus*, that none of the inhabitants of *Pothaina* shall be left to take away the *Glory* from their *Children*. I hope the very God of peace and truth will make his abode with us.—Now, shall we be favoured with an account how they received church members?

Epenetus. I told you before, that they had appointed the *fifth* day of the week for a solemn day of prayer;—the church met betimes that day, and several brethren prayed with great affection, humility and
thank-

(f) *Micah* ii, 7, 9.

thankfulness before the Lord. — Then *Cywir* preached from *Psalms* xli. 4. *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God; the holy place of the tabernacles of the most high:* And while he preached the whole church experimentally understood the truth of the text; they were made glad indeed. — After sermon they sung the 46th *Psalms*; and then called those who stood some time propounded, to give an account severally of their faith and experience. * The first they called was one *Uniawn* (lately a *heathen*) and he was directed to a place where he might be conveniently heard by all. To him *Dewi* spoke as follows:

Dewi.

* A minute declaration of *Christian experience*, as here exemplified, can hardly be maintained to be of *universal* obligation, since it would be difficult to produce any scripture precept or precedent for it, in terms sufficiently explicit to justify such a conclusion. — On the other hand, nothing is more evident than that every adult candidate for christian fellowship should give *some account* of his qualifications, to the church to which he is about to join himself. But how far, and in what manner, he is to give this satisfaction (seeing scripture descends not to particulars) must be resolved to such general rules as these: — *Do all to the glory of God; — Let all things be done decently, and in order, — and to edification.* The manner, therefore, in which a church should desire satisfaction in this matter, depends on a variety of circumstances; such as the capacity of the person, — his gift of utterance, &c. A detail of circumstances from *one* may be very useful and edifying, but from *another* quite the reverse. Herein, as in most cases, *spiritual prudence* will be profitable to direct; whilst the greatest caution should be used by every christian society — that nothing be accounted and imposed as a *necessary* term of christian fellowship, where *scripture*, and the evident *reason* of the case are silent. See *TURNER'S Compendium of Social Religions*, chap. iii. § 9, and *Dr. WATTS'S Terms of Christian Communion*, Quest. ii, iii, viii, x.

Dewi. You are called now to the greatest honour next to *martyrdom*; — to confess Christ in the midst of a church of his. — Our city is strong, salvation is its walls, and the gates are open for all who *keep the truth* to enter in: We are encouraged to hope, that you know the grace of God in truth; an account of which, is what, as a church, we now desire.

Uniaon. To confess Christ is indeed a greater honour than any earthly dignity; and I would humbly confess him here, in the assembly of his saints, where he is greatly to be feared. I hope I am brought to adore and fear him in some measure of faith; and I am to tell you how that work was begun, and hitherto carried on. — The very time * that your honoured Teacher, *Yefan*, in his own house, before many witnesses, declared what God had done for his soul, — my brother *Cysawn* was present, and then visited by grace; who afterwards entered into church fellowship with you. I soon heard of his conversion to christianity, and immediately made the strictest observation on his walk and conduct: And though I sought an occasion to reproach, I found nothing but what I admired: So much meekness and love, so much hatred to sin, and zeal for duty, that I began to think there must be something *real* in what he professed. One evening I resolved to stay at his house till he had performed family prayer. The 16th chapter of *John* was read, where it is said that the Holy Spirit should *reprove the world of sin, because they believed not on Christ*. It struck me to the very soul; and I could hardly hear any thing that

* See Dial, ii, p. 62.

that was afterwards read. My brother prayed and mourned much before the Lord; but my heart smote me, and told me I had much more reason to mourn than he: So, under broken apprehensions of danger and unworthiness, I burst out into tears; which being observed by my dear brother, he sent up strong cries to heaven on my behalf. When he had done, he took me by the hand, — and I hung down my head, but neither of us could speak a word. This was on the *seventh* day at night. Next morning I came again, and told him, I had a mind to go to the christian assembly along with him: He said he was glad of it; and, in family prayer that morning, mentioned me very particularly, that the God of all grace would that day *visit* me. My concern was great; and when I came to the assembly, I began to think what it might be to be *visited* by the God of all grace, as my brother desired; and for some time I was in expectation of it: But somehow my expectation dropped; and while I was in that indolent way, he, who is now your honoured Pastor, said, with a loud voice, — “Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry.” (g) The words entered my soul; I fell down before their power: I owned I was *far* from righteousness, and yet so foolish as to be *stout-hearted*. I was made to loath myself in my own sight, and was sensible nothing in the world could help me. But when he came to speak of the Lord’s bringing his righteousness *near*, even to them

them that were too stout to go to it; and that God's salvation should not tarry, I was led to hope, that the *Messiah* would be even my Saviour. I found my poor soul willing to venture all upon him, let him do with me what seemed good in his sight. I went home with my brother, and told him how it had been with me; and asked him, was that what he meant by God's visiting me? He said, yes; Then said I, Brother, God has answered your prayer; and *visited* me with his salvation.—In the afternoon I heard your honoured *Teacher*; and in his discourse he mentioned the tenderness of Christ, as a shepherd, towards the feeblest in the flock; and said, that we have the greatest reason to be confident of this very thing, “that where he had begun, “the good work, he would certainly finish it.” It greatly encouraged me: I went home, shut myself up in a room, and tried to pour out my soul before God, which I did in a very broken manner. But a word that I had heard—*He despiseth not the prayer of the poor*—was very encouraging to me. Ever since, I have endeavoured to follow the Lord in all his appointments;—and being fully persuaded that church fellowship is one, I desire to follow him in that also.

Dewi. You said, that you were led to hope the *Messiah* would be your Saviour; who do you apprehend that *Messiah* is?

Uniawn. *Jesus*, the Son of God, and the Son of the Virgin; God-Man in two distinct natures, but one Person; ordained to save sinners.

Dewi. And what do you think he saves you from?

Uniawn.

Uniawn. From my sins, the curse of the law, and the wrath to come.

Dewi. Have you then no sin, now he is your Saviour?

Uniawn. Yes, I have innumerable evils cleaving to my nature; and under a sense of them I daily mourn before the Lord,—the God of pardons;—yet they are not imputed to me.

Dewi. What then becomes of them?

Uniawn. They were all imputed to Christ; he “bore them in his own body on the tree.”

Dewi. Who imputed your sins to Christ?

Uniawn. “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Dewi. But does not God desire you to live righteously?

Uniawn. Yes; and I find, through grace, an earnest desire to be found in all duty: But no part of this is my justifying righteousness.

Dewi. What is the rule of your duty?

Uniawn. The eternal, moral Law of God, which the doctrine of faith in the Son of God establishes.

Dewi. What thoughts have you of Christ, as the Son of God?

Uniawn. He is every way above my thoughts: I am enabled to submit them to what is revealed concerning him;—that he is the infinite and eternal God,—the same in *Nature* with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, but distinct in *person*. In the Godhead there are three Persons, the *Father*, the *Word*, and the Holy Spirit; and *these three are one*. (h)

Dewi.

Derwi. How did he, being the eternal Word, become man?

Uniawn. By assuming the human nature (not a human person) into personal union with himself; and thus appeared to be, every way, such an high priest as became us.

Derwi. But in confessing and serving this glorious *Messiah*, you must expect tribulation; and how do you expect to go through?

Uniawn. Only in the strength of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and Sanctifier of the church.

Derwi. Brethren, if you have any thing else upon your minds to ask our friend, before he withdraws, I beg you would use freedom.—But nothing being asked, he was desired to withdraw.—Whereupon *Derwi* desired the brethren, who had been *deputed* to acquaint themselves as much as possible with his faith and experience, to give a brief account of what they knew thereof. They answered, that all the things he mentioned in the church were more than once declared to them, and other things of weight; that they had prayed with him, and had prevailed upon him to pray with them; which he did, they thought, in a savoury, humble, judicious manner.—Whereupon *Derwi* said unto the church, Brethren, if upon what you have heard of *Uniawn's* faith and experience, you judge him a converted person, a true believer in Christ,—signify it by lifting up your hands:—*Which they unanimously did.*—Then said *Derwi* to the *deputed* persons, Pray, Brethren, what account can you give the church of his walk and conversation?—They answered, that they had made a diligent enquiry, and could find nothing but what

was

was agreeable to the profession he made: But, said they, his own brother *Cyfiarwn* is present, if you choose to ask him. Then said *Dewi*, brother *Cyfiarwn*, you are desired to give the church your thoughts upon his conversation. *Cyfiarwn* answered, that he knew nothing, since God began to work upon him, but what was agreeable to that work.

UPON this *Dewi* said to the church, Brethren, if from what you have heard of *Uniaarwn's* faith, experience and conversation, you do, as a church of Christ, judge it your present duty to receive him into fellowship, as a church member, signify it by lifting up your hands:—*Which they unanimously did.*

WHEREUPON he was called in; to whom *Dewi* said, “ This church of Christ hath considered the
“ account you gave of God’s work upon your soul,
“ and the account given of your conversation, and
“ we judge it our duty to testify our love to you in
“ the Lord, and receive you into fellowship with us.
“ Wherefore, if you do, in this assembly, solemnly
“ give up yourself to the Eternal God in Christ,
“ as your God; receive Christ, as your Prophet,
“ Priest and King; and give up yourself unto us as
“ a church,—promising in the strength of the Lord
“ to walk with us in the performance of all duties
“ incumbent on a church member,—signify it by
“ lifting up your hand:”—*Which he did.*—Then said *Dewi*, “ We also, as a church of Christ (the
“ church standing while he spoke) promise in the
“ same strength of our Lord, to perform all relative
“ duties towards you as a member of us: And so
“ in the name of this church of Christ, I do receive
“ you, and give you the right hand of fellowship:
“ And.

“ And may this entrance of yours into the visible
“ kingdom of heaven, in this world, be attended
“ with a mighty blessing! *Amen.*”

Philalethes. His experience was of the right kind:
But what precious things did the questions draw out
of him!

Theophilus. Pray *Epenetus* proceed to the rest.

Epenetus. The next that was called was one *Jonathan Ben-Israel*, by birth a *Jew*: He was desired to stand as the former had done, and to give an account of the work of God upon his soul. Accordingly he stood up, and spoke as follows:

Jonathan Ben-Israel. I am amazed at the wonders of providence; and more so at the wonders of grace! I was born at *Bethany*, within two miles of *Jerusalem*: (Oh that I could say the *Jerusalem* that now is!) My father, *Israel Ben-Joseph*, was at *Jerusalem* when *Jesus* was crucified; and, for ought I know, was one of those who consented to his death. However, when I was a boy, I often heard him speak of him with disdain; saying he had seen *that Messiah* hanging upon the tree. I was brought up in great prejudice against *Jesus of Nazareth*; and I thought, on many accounts, it was impossible he should be the *Messiah*; and particularly because, as I was often told, he was a mean man, a carpenter, despised and rejected of men, a servant of rulers; utterly unable to deliver our nation from the *Roman* servitude, much more unable to make *Jerusalem* the praise of the whole earth. And this prejudice was greatly strengthened in me from two considerations; first, that we knew from whence *Jesus* came; and, then, I was taught to believe, that whenever the
Messiah

Messiah should come, he would abide for ever, (which I thought *Jesus* did not) and immediately make our nation head of all. So that I must now own, to my very great shame, that I was an *obstinate Jew*. But the miseries, foretold by the blessed *Jesus*, growing heavy upon the nation, — and, not knowing how soon the city of *Jerusalem* would fall into the hands of *Roman* cruelty; and, having also an inclination to see some other part of the world, — I travelled through the *Lesser Asia*, into *Europe*: and, having heard of the fame of *Britain*, my curiosity led me to visit the chief city, *Caerludd*; where I have now resided for more than three years. — About two months ago, passing near this place, I saw several people enter in, and, thoughtlessly enough, I entered along with them, not knowing whither, nor for what. — In a little time, I understood what the assembly was engaged in, and was resolved to see it out. — *Yefan*, your present honoured Teacher, took for his text, *Luke* xxiv. 25, 26. “O fools, “and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets “have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered “these things, and to enter into his glory?” The words seized, and seemed to pierce me to the heart. I quickly found, that the very reasons why I rejected *Jesus*, were indeed strong reasons why I should receive him. I saw, that the true *Messiah* must be such as *Jesus* was; — despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; that he must be numbered among the transgressors; that his hands and feet must be pierced, and that on his vesture they should cast lots; that he must drink of the brook in the way, and then lift up the

the head. Nothing like this did I ever feel before; nor, when I entered into the assembly, was I desirous of such conviction. It came by a power that evidenced itself to be of God.—Then I thought, that the very first revelation of the *Messiah*, expressed his suffering, as his way to glory; in that *his heel* was to be *bruised*. (i) I then saw, the *Messiah* must come in that way, and undergo such things, or he could not be the *Messiah* God had promised.—I quickly returned to my lodgings, retired to my chamber, and, desiring the Eternal God of truth now to guide me, left my heart with him. I took the Law and the Prophets, which I had by me, and read and considered; still looking to the God of truth, that I might not be deceived. I found the sceptre was departed from *Judah*, and the Lawgiver from between his feet, and therefore that *Shiloh*, the *Messiah*, was certainly come. I found that *Messiah*, the desire of all nations, should come into the *second* temple, which is now destroyed by the *Romans*; therefore the *Messiah* is come, or into that temple he can never enter. And, what put the matter out of all doubt with me, was, what I found in *Daniel*,—That after *three score and two weeks* (*i. e.* 434 years from the *finishing* of the rebuilding of the city,) *Messiah* should be *cut off*, but not for himself. (k) And the manner and reason of his being cut off, I found, more at large, in *Psalms* xxii. and *Isaiah* liii. Then was I made to look unto him whom I had pierced, with mourning and bitterness. In a little time I saw, that thus my
fal-

(i) *Gen.* iii, 15.(k) *Dan.* ix, 26.

salvation was wrought, and the salvation of *Israel* effectually provided for. I was led to venture my soul upon *Jesus*, for pardon and peace. He is *Jehovah* my righteousness: So I have received him, and so I hope I shall walk in him. And since God hath enabled me to receive his Son, *Jesus*, my Saviour, I have been greatly refreshed in your assemblies, in the publick worship of our Redeemer. — I hope I am helped to admire the wisdom of grace and providence, in bringing me to *Britain* to be converted; and here with you, I desire to serve the Lord *Jesus Christ*, as a *church member*, in all his evangelical appointments.

Yefan. Were you ever in a Christian Assembly, before the time you mentioned?

Jonathan Ben-Israel. No; and had I known *this* to be one, it is like enough I should not have gone in then: For I always thought they worshipped one who was not the Eternal God.

Yefan. Then you thought the *Messiah* must be the Eternal God?

Jonathan Ben-Israel. Yes, yes, — *Thy throne*, O God, *is for ever and ever*. — The Prince of peace must be the mighty God.

Yefan. Then you are satisfied now, that all divine worship is due to *Jesus*, though his appearance was once so mean.

Jonathan Ben-Israel. That I am; and, I hope, I can say to him, as the once unbelieving disciple did, *My Lord, and my God*.

Yefan. Then the mean condition he appeared in once, is no stumbling-block to you now.

Jona-

Jonathan Ben-Israel. No; I see now there was a necessity for that meanness and humiliation, even unto death; for, otherwise, he could not be the true *Messiah*.

Yefan. What thoughts have you now of the Law of *Moses*?

Jonathan Ben-Israel. Honourable thoughts: The moral law is my perpetual rule: The law of ceremonies—in a great measure the Gospel of our fathers—was the shadow of good things to come; and of the whole *Jesus* is the sum.

Yefan. What apprehensions have you of your natural state?

Jonathan Ben-Israel. A state of sin and wrath; I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. I have lived in sin—especially the sin of *unbelief*—all my days: And, though I hope the Lord has given me faith of late, I find that sin still cleaves to all I do.

Yefan. The ancient *Jews* had their sacrifices and atonements for sin;—under a sense of such sinfulness as you have expressed, what course do you take?

Jonathan Ben-Israel. By *faith*, I flee to him, who finished transgression, and made an end of sacrifice for sins; and, by once offering up himself, has for ever perfected them that are sanctified.

Yefan. And what do you find to be the tendency of such a faith?

Jonathan Ben-Israel. It worketh by love, puts me upon a humble walk with God, inclines me to all duty, and makes me earnestly desire communion with God, and with his people.

H

Epenetus.

Epenetus. Some more questions were asked, and freedom to ask more was offered; and (the same method being used with him that I mentioned before) he was received into fellowship. — *Three* more spoke at that time; *one* of them was received, and the other *two* encouraged, and continued as *catechumens*, for farther satisfaction: And *Yefan* concluded the day with prayer.*

Theophilus. And a good day too! May the eternal God do such great things for all his churches, and make them glad!

Syllogisticus. I humbly think our dear *Epenetus* should give us some account of their breaking-bread day, which, I find, was just at hand.

Epenetus. The Lord's day in the forenoon, *Yefan* preached from *John* i. 29, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* — And in the afternoon *Dewi*, who had seen the order of the church at *Hyfrydle*, — after desiring the *Messengers* to take their seats, and partake with the church; — in a short prayer, sent up petitions to the God of all grace, for his presence with them; that he would graciously fill their souls with faith and love, and make himself known to them in this their breaking of bread; that they might attend upon so solemn an ordi-

* THE transactions of this day were entered in a book, which they called, *A book of remembrance, written before the Lord, for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name*; — in which all things of moment were judiciously and methodically entered; and which they found abundantly useful. — And (without pretending to *scripture proof*, or searching into *Paul's parchments*) may not the considerations of order and utility, sufficiently recommend such a church book to every christian congregation?

ordinance, in a becoming spirit, and receive from the Lord spiritual strength thereby. — Then took that text, *Rev. v. 6. And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.* — He read the words with great affection, and observed, first, — That the poor children of God often meet with a pleasing surprize: *I beheld, and lo, a lamb.* The Apostle had heard of a *Lion*, and he beheld, and lo, it was a *Lamb*. Persons who have entertained heart-terrifying apprehensions of Christ, find, upon real knowledge of him, that he is a Lamb, meek and lowly in heart. — This was precious to poor ones newly drawn out of their distresses. Then he observed to them — The dignity of the church of Christ; — his *Throne, living ones, elders.* In the next place, — What made them indeed glorious, the Lamb in the *midst* of them. Then he desired them to observe, — His posture, *standing*, ready to receive them, defend them, and be viewed by them. And then, — He prayed them to take a humbling melting view of him, a Lamb, as it had been *slain*. On this he insisted much; — the causes and consequences of his death; and why there must be, in the midst of the church, a constant remembrance thereof. And, lastly, for their great encouragement, he observed to the church, — That the Lamb was *omnipotent*, having seven horns; *omniscient*, having seven eyes; *omnipresent*, having the seven Spirits of God, present in all the earth. — The church, with tender affections and melt-

ing love, heard all that he said to these things, and found themselves in the kingdom of heaven.*

Neophytus. But, was all this *essential* to the ordinance of the Lord's supper; or only what the minister thought expedient?

Epenetus. The latter, to be sure: He thought, seeing they had time, not to make indecent haste, but to fill it up with becoming solemnity.

Christophilus. Truly, I am of the mind, that churches should not make this blessed work a *hurry*: And, therefore, that it would be better to omit a part of the sermon, than to come with a tired nature to attend upon so solemn a feast.

Epenetus. Then, after *Dewi* had finished his discourse upon the forementioned text, he took the bread, that was ready prepared upon the table, in his hand, and read 1 Cor. xi. 23. *For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.* He briefly explained the words, and assisted their meditations upon them, and then said, — "In the name of the Lord Jesus, and according to his example, I shall take this bread and give thanks."

WHEREUPON he affectionately prayed, that God would *bless* the bread for the designed use, — that they might be enabled to *discern* the Lord's body, and

* It will probably occur to the judicious reader, that some of *Dewi's* remarks and explications of the above text (as — the dignity of a christian church, &c.) are rather well meant than solid. But if any wish to see the above passage handled in a copious, experimental, sublime and heavenly manner, they may peruse that savoury and truly valuable piece intitled *Christus in celo*, by Mr. *Bradbury*.

and by faith *feed* upon the bread of life,—and that they might worthily partake of this feast, to their growth in grace and real profit;—returned *thanks* for the wonderful provision made in Christ for them,—blessed God for the institution,—and desired they might be helped to attend upon their dear Lord therein with holy cheerfulness.

THEN Dewi read the next verse, *And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.* He explained the words, assisted their meditations with proper remarks, and applications pertinent to the purpose; then said,—“In the name, and according to the example of our dear Lord, I break this bread, in remembrance of his sacred body that was bruised for our iniquities.” And when he had broken the bread, he said,—“Take, eat, this is the Lord’s body which is broken for you:” Which they did; and all the while the tenderest passions of love and delight appeared upon them all.

THEN Dewi read on; *After the same manner also he took the cup.*—And Dewi, with a cup of wine before him, said,—“In the Name, and according to the example of Jesus, our Redeemer, I take this cup, and return thanks.” Which he did, adoring the wonders of divine grace, justice and wisdom, in the blood of the Lamb,—the blood of the everlasting covenant, that cleanseth from all sin, and speaketh better things than the blood of Abel;—desired God to bless that cup, and make it a cup of blessing indeed,—the communion of the blood of Christ;—and, that they might be helped, by faith, to drink

of the wine of the kingdom; whereby they might greatly rejoice in the Lord, as those whose cup runneth over.

THEN he said, "This cup is the new Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me;" and delivered it to the next brother, after drinking of it himself, and so it went through the church; who, as the pardoned ones of God, thankfully received it. *

THEN he prayed for the blessing of Heaven on what they had been concerned in; — and the church made, from seat to seat, a collection for the poor. They sung a part of the 23d Psalm, and concluded.

THERE was a meeting that Lord's day evening, when *Ffyddlon* — greatly affected with the conversion of the Jew, — preached from *Rom. xi. 26, 27. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.* — The third

* *Neophytus* moves a question, about — not the whims of Transubstantiation and Consubstantiation, that contradict all principles of revelation, reason and sense; nor about gestures and postures, but — the verses immediately following those which *Dewi* made use of; (*1 Cor. xi. 27—29.*) which have been so terrible to many tender minds, for whose sakes this *Note* is principally intended. A great deal of this dread arises from the inaptitude there may be in one language to express the true meaning of another. The word *Damnation*, through use, is armed with terror, and seems to intend nothing but eternal destruction, under the indignation of the Almighty. But (*κρίμα*) the word so rendered was frequently used in another sense, to denote any damage or disadvantage: And here, if I mistake not, it signifies any judgment, by way of corrections.

third day of that week the church met; *Ffyddlon* and *Cywir* both prayed, and, in a short but sweet discourse, took their leave of them, with the tenderest affection, commending them to God and the word of his grace. *Deuvi* and *Yefan* also prayed, and, with many tears, committed to God the beloved messengers, — the church of Christ they belonged to, — and the whole interest of the dear Redeemer. Early the next morning the messengers departed, carrying with them, among other tokens of love and gratitude, a letter to the church at *Hyfrydle*, which, when they came home, was read in a full meeting. They reported what they had seen of God's gracious dealings, and the church rejoiced, sung the praises of God, and gave him glory.

Christophilus. O the faith, love, zeal and simplicity of those primitive christians! Well, the grace of Christ is still the same, nor is his Spirit straitened. I hope this account will put me, as long as I live, upon more fervent supplications to the God of all grace, that he would bring me, and all his poor children, into more acquaintance with such a glory.

Theophilus. Now, dear *Epenetus*, what steps did they further take at *Caerludd*, to build themselves up in their most holy faith?

Epenetus. Why, all the ordinary means of grace, praying, preaching, hearing, praising, conversation, &c. — But in order to strengthen the hands of their *Pastor* and *Teacher*, and to encourage them in the Lord's work, they met without their knowledge; and, after prayer, *Haelionus*, one of the Deacons, spoke as follows:

“ BRETHREN, It is by the amazing grace of God
“ we are what we are. Not long since in Heathenism,
“ and now a church of Christ! It hath pleased our
“ exalted Prince and Saviour, the great Shepherd
“ and Bishop of our souls, to raise up for us per-
“ sons eminently blessed with abilities for service,
“ in the work of the ministry; — they were made
“ use of for the conversion of most of us, and the
“ edification of us all. They took the oversight of
“ us *willingly*; of which the love of Christ appears
“ to be the spring. The proof of them we know;
“ they have devoted themselves to the word and
“ prayer; they serve the Lord, they serve us. But,
“ though they never undertook this service among-
“ us from worldly views, we shall be the most *un-*
“ *grateful* people living, if we consider them not.
“ Entangle themselves with the affairs of this life
“ they must not, they have undertaken to give
“ themselves wholly up to our service in the Lord.
“ They are persons capable of hard study, and great
“ improvement, let us not *discourage* them; let us
“ not *injure* ourselves. They sow unto us spiritual
“ things; they should reap of our temporal things.
“ I hope it shall never be said, that either of them,
“ or theirs, suffer in the least for their *diligent* at-
“ tendance upon the work of the Lord among us.
“ The ox that treads out the corn must *not be*
“ *muzzled*; they have power to eat and drink, they
“ are *worthy of double honour*: And though provi-
“ dence has entitled them to a considerable mea-
“ sure of worldly substance, they for our sakes put
“ themselves out of the way of *improving* it: And
“ the Lord Jesus, the great *Lawgiver* of the church,
“ says,

“ says, that they who preach the gospel should *live*
 “ *by the gospel*: Wherefore, Brethren, I humbly
 “ move for a present token of our *duty* towards
 “ them, and *subscriptions* for the time to come.”

Diwyd, one of the *ruling Elders*, said, “ What
 “ our brother has moved for, appears a *duty* in the
 “ strongest light, and I would only add, that since
 “ many of us are *blessed* with considerable substance,
 “ we should make it appear, by a chearful con-
 “ tribution, that our substance is a *blessing* to us.
 “ And for my part I offer this—and shall sub-
 “ scribe more: And now I do, in the name of
 “ Christ, according to my office among you, call
 “ every one—as God has prospered him—to this
 “ *Duty*.”

WHEREUPON a large collection was made; and a very encouraging subscription. What they collected was divided, by the *Deacons*, and delivered to the *Pastor* and *Teacher*; who owned the love of the church, and others not yet members, in what was done.

Theophilus. Beautiful altogether! Love to Christ, and his kingdom, put them upon their duty; and the same love put the people upon theirs; and it was an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God. (l). Even so hath the Lord ordained. (m)—Now, dear *Epenetus*, let us hear what steps they further took, to strengthen and enlarge the Redeemer's interest?

Epenetus. Their love to, and care for, the children of the church was very great, on whom they looked as standing in a *special relation* to them:

H 5

And

(l) *Phil.* iv, 18.(m) *1 Cor.* ix, 14.

And therefore looked upon themselves under a *special obligation* to take care of their education. Therefore they resolved upon a *Christian School*, with all the ways and means needful to support it, to the utmost of their ability.

Christophilus. Bravely done! but where could they find Masters?

Epenetus. God is never at a loss how to prosper the good purposes he puts into the hearts of his people. You remember I told you of one *Edgar*, converted by grace at an *Inn*, when *Drewi* and *Yefan* were returning from *Hyfrydle*. This young man, as you were then informed, understood the *Roman* tongue well; and by reason of advantages he enjoyed, was a considerable proficient in the *Greek* language. While he was in the *Roman* army, God was preparing him for usefulness in a *Christian Church*. As soon as ever he had settled at *Caerludd*, next to religion, books and learning seemed to be the business of his life; nor did his kind *benefactors* spare any costs in procuring him all the helps he could desire. This young man, being eminently religious, sound in the faith, and a very improving scholar, they fixed upon as a master. His brother *Cradog*, and *Alfred*, who had wonderfully improved in *writing*, and in several parts of the *mathematicks*, they fixed upon as proper assistants, being also very godly.

Christophilus. The wonders of divine providence are such, that a believing adoration is always our duty, and distrust our sin and shame. But how did they proceed?

Epenetus. They appointed a solemn day of fasting and prayer, earnestly to desire the blessing of heaven upon their designs, begging their seed might serve
the

the Lord, and be accounted to him for a generation. When prayer was over, *Yefan* spoke to the church as follows:

Yefan. "Brethren, It is the will of our heavenly Father, that we should use all the means he puts into our power, to bring up our children in the knowledge and fear of the Lord. Our ascended Redeemer, who giveth gifts unto men, hath been pleased to qualify some among us to be teachers of children and youth. Not to use such gifts is to despise the bounty of our heavenly Benefactor. We are apprehensive that such a person might be very useful among us; and we have reason to believe, upon proof and experience, that our brother *Edgar* is, in a very encouraging measure, qualified for such a service; besides his capacity for teaching the languages: Wherefore, if you do, as a church of Christ, call our brother *Edgar* to the office of a *Catechist*, and teacher of the principles of religion, occasionally in the church, and more statedly in the school, signify it by lifting up your hands:"
—Which they unanimously did.

Yefan. "You see, brother *Edgar*, the place God has given you in the esteem and affections of the church. We are for committing to your care, under God, the dearest and most valuable treasure we have upon earth, our dear children, — to be catechized and taught by you, in the principles of our most holy faith. Are you willing to undertake this work, which we hope will be very useful? Your answer is desired.

Edgar. "I am very insufficient in all respects; but I hope, through grace, I am the Lord's ser-

“vant, and am willing according to the utmost of
 “my capacity, to serve the *church* and the *children*
 “thereof, if set apart thereunto. — But I beg your
 “prayers, for I am a child.”

Yefan. “Brethren, if you do, as a church of
 “Christ, ordain and set apart our beloved *Edgar*
 “to the office of a teacher and *Catechist*, — promising
 “all due encouragement and regard to him in the
 “Lord, — signify it by lifting up your hands:” —
Which they did as before.

THEN *Derwi* prayed, that the God of all grace
 would graciously bless this design; yea, that it might
 be filled with blessings to posterity; — that God
 would greatly strengthen his servant for the work to
 which he was set apart; — that others, designed for
 his assistance, though not called into office, might
 be blessed and made very useful; — and that God
 would make that Christian School, a seminary of
 learning and eminent piety. — Then was sung the
 127th *Psalms*, and the day concluded with a large
 subscription for the laudable design, in which *Derwi*
 and *Yefan* gave a generous example.

Theophilus. For christian schools of learning, I
 would always have a becoming value: In subordi-
 nation to the grace of God they are exceeding use-
 ful. The *Jewish* church had its schools of learning,
 out of which, generally, the Lord called forth his
 prophets. Without learning, the scriptures could not
 have been *translated*; nor many words and phrases,
 vastly comprehensive and emphatical in the *original*
 languages, be discovered and improved. Persons who
 despise it, know not what they do.

Christophilus.

Christophilus. We have great reason to be thankful to the Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, for putting it into the hearts of so many of the *godly*, in and about the capital city of *Britain*, even in *our days*, to form themselves into a *Society* for the advancement of learning in the churches. A *generosity* worthy of men and christians; and a *design* truly laudable and religious! I hope this will prove an eminent blessing to the churches of Christ; and their contributions will be a *fruit* that will turn to their account(n) in this world and in that to come. They honour God with their substance, and God will honour them. They desire to see the churches filled with *godly* and *learned* ministers, and I hope that desire of the righteous shall be granted. May all encouragement attend them! But how did they go on at *Caerludd*? And how did *Edgar* enter upon his work?

Epenetus. Why, truly, under much fear, and sense of inability: He thought his strength unequal to the work; yet he was encouraged by that glorious promise, — “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” (o) He desired the *Elders* of the church to come and open the school with prayer, that there might be a sanctified *entrance* on the great design; which they did with great affection and enlargement: And when they had done, they said unto him, — “Go in the strength of the Lord God, and make mention of his *righteousness*, even of his only.” This encouraged him; — but the presence of the Lord upon his

(o) *Phil. ii. 13.*(o) 2 *Cor. xii. 9.*

his soul, and eminent success in his work, quickly encouraged him more; for in a little time *learning* did so flourish, and early *piety* so shine in the school, that the church thought it their duty to set apart a day of thanksgiving on that account, and with great solemnity and joy it was kept.

Neophytus. If I mistake not, *Edgar* bore a double capacity, that of a *schoolmaster*, and that of a *Catechist*: Did his ordination comprehend both, or only the latter?

Philaethes. Only the latter to be sure; — *religion* was the foundation of the design; and *languages*, &c. were in subordination to *Christianity*.

Neophytus. But, whatever proficiency his *riper* scholars might make in learning, I find he could not assist them farther than the *Greek* language, the *original* of the *new* testament. It was a pity that such a christian school should be so deficient.

Epenetus. But this defect was quickly made up: I told you of the conversion of *Jonathan Ben-Israel*, the *Jew*; and now must tell you that he proved of *vast* use to the church and school. He had two or three bibles by him; — understood the *Hebrew* tongue well, and had some acquaintance with the *Chaldee*. *Dewi* and *Yefan* could not rest but they must learn, and so took him to their houses every other week. And do you think that *Edgar*, also, having such an opportunity, would not improve it? He did, and to a brave purpose. — And after some time — as several converted young men wished to be acquainted with the *Hebrew* language, and because the work was heavy upon *Edgar* alone — *Jonathan Ben-Israel* was preferred (excuse the expression) to
a *He-*

a *Hebrew Professorship*, in the first, and in that day famous, *Christian School* in *Caerludd*.

Neophytus. I wish I could be favoured with some account of the *rules* of that school?

Epenetus. You may depend upon it, that the methods of education are since then much improved. I shall only observe, that *Religion* was the chief design of the school; — that they diligently attended to the *method* they thought best; — that they kept strictly to their *hours*, and always begun and concluded the day with solemn *prayer* to God.

Theophilus. As you have already said, that this school eminently answered its primary intention, so I doubt not but God brought out of it many eminent servants of his, successfully to plead his cause, and publish his gospel. — Pray what *other* methods did the church take to establish and enlarge itself?

Epenetus. The church, as it then dispersedly stood, was disposed of into several *divisions*; and they judged it expedient, that every division should have a private meeting three evenings in a week: And, lest they should be cloyed with their frequency, it was agreed, that the *first* should be, on the meaning of some portion of scripture; the *second*, on some head of divinity; and the *third*, on christian experience. — In those meetings one person was chosen monthly as *president*; and a suitable person for a *scribe*. The minutes of those meetings were to be brought to a general monthly meeting, where sometimes the *Pastor*, and sometimes the *Teacher*, presided; and whatever was thought very pertinent and useful, was then entered and kept; what seemed empty and frivolous,

volous, was laid aside; what appeared unsound, marked and opposed.

Neophytus. But our meetings here at *Potheina*, are not ordered thus: Pray, what rule had they for what they did?

Epenetus. The same with us: To do all to edification, — to build up themselves in their most holy faith, — to exhort one another daily, — to speak often one to another — and to see that the word of Christ dwell in them richly in all wisdom.

Neophytus. Now you are speaking of the use they were to make of Christ's word, I am thinking how they did for Bibles.

Epenetus. Why truly that was a great difficulty: — But their diligence will sorely condemn the indolence and sloth of a professing generation, who vainly trifle away their time, in a land of Bibles. — I told you of *Cradog* and *Alfred*, the under-masters in the school, and of their improvement in writings; they also quickly taught others: Besides, many, that were added to the church, could write well before they were converted; and now here was full employ for them all. Some would transcribe one part of the bible, and some another; — and many a poor heart thought himself happy if he could borrow one of the gospels, or epistles, to work at it night and day, for another wanted it. Thus, after some years, they were pretty well stored. Those who improved well in the languages, under *Edgar*, spent some time in transcribing *Greek Testaments*, and some would venture upon the *Septuagint*. They also procured from abroad all the copies they could. As for *Jonathan Ben-Israel*, much of his time was taken up

up in transcribing the law and the prophets: And *Dewi* and *Yefan*, having attained great acquaintance with the *Hebrew*, strictly examined and compared the copies.

Thophilus. I am inclined to think, that their meetings of conference were of great use to them.

Epenetus. Of very great use indeed! They were themselves *religiously* employed, and many of their children and acquaintance, who sometimes desired to be present, were converted there. Besides, it was of singular advantage to their Bishops, who, as I said before, examined *monthly* the *minutes* of those meetings. From thence they could judge of the *state* of the flock, how they improved in knowledge and faith, — what temptations attended them, — and what supports they had under trials; and even they themselves were often refreshed.

Neophytus. How glad should I be to see some of the minutes of those meetings — the method they used in explaining portions of *scripture*, or treating a head of *divinity*, or declaring their *experiences*; — but, perhaps, you can give us a particular account of each.

Epenetus. The design of my story will not admit of particulars: I must only observe, — That, in the *first*, they carefully considered the *scope* of the context, the *phrases* and *words* of the text, what light other scriptures might cast thereupon, what *observations* offered themselves, and always drew practical *inferences*: In the *second*, they always kept close to the *analogy* of faith; — and, in the *third*, to *sincerity* and *truth*.

Christophilus.

Christophilus. Great was their *glory*, and my soul loves to hear of them. But, being now very *nume-rous*, pray, what methods did they take to maintain the beauty of order?

Epenetus. The ruling Elders desired there might be more chosen: And accordingly *two* more were added to them, whose names were *Gryffydd* and *Add-fawyn*, and ordained in the same manner as they were.

Theophilus. But, seeing their success was great, surely they wanted not only more Elders, but more *places* of worship; for a crowded audience must be very uncomfortable, especially to *weak* constitutions: Pray, how did they do?

Epenetus. Truly the ancient *Britons* were not persons of such weak constitutions—troubled with *Hips* and vapours;—they knew but little of the unhappiness of those who live only to eat and drink: Their diet was plain and wholesome, and themselves were given to industry and exercise. However, to be always crowded must be very inconvenient to the strongest; therefore the Elders agreed to propose, in a full church meeting, what appeared to them most *convenient* for the glory of Christ and the comfort of the people: And, the day being come, after prayers, *Dewi* the Pastor spoke to the church as follows:

Dewi. “Brethren; in the regions of the shadow
“of death, light hath sprung up; and we who were
“sometimes darkness, are now light in the Lord!
“Where it was said, Ye are not my people, it is
“now said, Ye are the Sons of the living God.
“This amazing grace we can never sufficiently ad-
“mire and adore. And this was yet a small thing

“in

“ in the sight of the Lord God ; he hath multiplied
“ us, and we are not few ; he hath glorified us, and
“ we are not small ; and our children are as afore-
“ time, who, through grace, make haste. God hath
“ been pleased not only to give us his word, his sta-
“ tutes and ordinances, but hath greatly blessed the
“ same, for the enlargement of his kingdom. He
“ hath multiplied us with holy men, as a flock ;
“ and in our thronged assemblies they seem to say
“ to us, Give place to us that we may dwell. We
“ have, upon prayer, and mature deliberation,
“ thought, that we should now divide ourselves into
“ several *distinct* churches ; yet, abiding in fervent
“ love, and christian communion ; and have thought
“ this might greatly tend to our edification, the
“ spreading and strengthening the interest of our
“ dear Redeemer. Thus your Elders, retaining the
“ dearest affection to you all, have judged, and now
“ our thoughts are laid before you.”

Christophilus. Poor hearts ! how did they receive it ?

Epenetus. Universal silence filled the assembly for
some time ; they hung down the head, and wept ;
and the Elders themselves could not refrain. At
last, one of the members, whose name was *Serchol*,
stood up ; and submissively said, “ Will our honour-
“ able Elders give me leave to speak a few words ? ”
Leave being granted, he spoke as follows :

Serchol. “ Our very dear and much honoured
“ Elders, I believe we are all under a great sur-
“ prize : Under your ministry we were born, and
“ indeed fed and cherished ; with submission be it
“ spoken, to us you owe love and *care*, and to you
“ we owe love and *duty*. We have given up our-
“ selves.

"selves to God, and to each other according to
 "his will, and therefore are *related* to each other
 "in the most sacred bonds. — What you have pro-
 "posed must *separate* us, at least many of us, from
 "you our Overseers in the Lord, and from one
 "another. Many of us have, with joy, passed under
 "the frowns of parents and friends for the sake
 "of Christ:—Yea, we were made willing to *suffer the*
 "*loss of all things* for his sake, and that of com-
 "munion with one another.—And must we now be
 "separated from our dear *brethren*—and our spi-
 "ritual *fathers*, who break to us the bread of life?"
 And with that he lift up his voice and wept:—
 And the whole church (without being asked) *lift up*
their hands to what he said, under many tears.

Christophilus. O *Epenetus*, how did the Elders do to stand this?

Epenetus. Why truly, stand it they could not:—Only with many tears they testified their dear love to the whole church, and dismissed the assembly; and there was nothing but sobbing, sighing, and tokens of grief upon them all.

Theophilus. How love discovers itself!

Epenetus. It is impossible to express the love and affections of that day. — Some could not speak a word, but only gave their Elders—such a *look*, as signified a thousand things: Some, weeping, were ready to fall at their feet;—others hastened to their own houses, to pour out their souls before God.

Neophytus. Sure the Elders never moved it any more!

Epenetus. You shall hear. When the hurry of passions was over, the Elders met again, and mourned
over

over their imprudent manner of proposing what they still judged necessary: They desired the divine direction, and then called the church to a solemn day of fasting and prayer, assuring them that, in the strength of the Lord, they would stand by them, and the interest of Christ, till death.

WHEN the day came, *Nefan*, the Teacher, spoke as follows:

“*Dear* beloved brethren,

“Your love, and our duty, we value above life.
“We plainly see, that you are taught of God to
“love *one another*, and we thankfully own, that your
“love to us abounds. We have seen, through grace,
“the increase of Christ’s kingdom; and it is upon
“our hearts to see it increase more and more. For
“this purpose, seeing our assemblies are large and
“numerous, we have thought it expedient, that
“upon three Lord’s days in a month, we should set
“up *two* worshipping assemblies, among our friends
“in some distant parts of the town. You see that
“God hath blessed us with some [gifted teaching
“brethren; — they shall take their turns in those
“assemblies, and brother *Deuvi* and myself will take
“our’s. — Every month shall be still our church
“meeting, for worship and discipline as usual, and
“the following Lord’s day for the breaking of bread,
“when there shall be no meeting in the foremen-
“tioned places. This method, as it preserves the
“church intirely one, will tend, we humbly think,
“to spread the interest; and give a precious op-
“portunity to our teaching brethren, to work for
“the Lord.” — Then, observing a serenity and sa-
tisfaction in their countenances, he said, “If you
“do

“do, as a church of Christ, fix upon and appoint
“this order, signify it by lifting up your hands:”
Which they unanimously did.—Then they chearfully
sung the 87th *Psalm*, and concluded.

Neophytus. Well, this was a blessed turn;—but
who were those teaching brethren?

Epenetus. *Edgar*, his brother *Cradog*, and *Alfred*.
These were very godly and gifted. And moreover,
by that time, some other godly young men were
brought up in the school, to some degree of emi-
nency, and appeared as trees of righteousness of the
Lord’s planting.

Theophilus. When things were put into this posture,
pray, what progress was made?

Epenetus. They quickly prepared two places of
worship: The first was opened by *Deowi*, and the
other by *Yefan*: Each had a large audience, and
both were blessed with success, in the conversion of
many heathen persons, whose *curiosity* led them thi-
ther.—So did God bear testimony to the word of
his grace.

Christophilus. Though they went forth upon this
design, at first, with weeping; yet they bore pre-
cious seed, and are quickly made to rejoice, bring-
ing their sheaves with them: But I suppose God
had a very *great harvest* before him; how did they
proceed?

Epenetus. They all took their turns,—the teach-
ing brethren,—the *Pastor*,—and the teaching *Elder*;
and the Lord was pleased to smile greatly upon
their labours, and many were added unto them daily.

Neophytus. Then, doubtless, the Elders quickly
moved again for them to become distinct churches.

Epenetus.

Epenetus. They made no great haste for that: They saw all things working that way, and they gladly let them take their course. — The young preachers were received, more and more, into the affections and esteem of the godly. Their sermons were sound and affectionate, their conversation spiritual, savoury and edifying, and their visits useful. — Besides, God blessed their ministry for the *conversion* of many, by whom they were highly valued as *fathers* in Christ. After some time, they had a consultation, in one of those new meetings, about becoming a separate church.

Neophytus. Their Elders having long before proposed it, the business did not require long consultation.

Epenetus. You are mistaken; they were afraid so much as to mention it, lest the church and Elders should question their love and duty.

Neophytus. How did they get over this?

Epenetus. The Elders, who partly knew their inclination, desired a brother Elder to put himself in such a way, as was most likely to *draw* it out of them; which he did. But, on signifying their wishes, they intreated it might not be looked upon as proceeding from the least *indifference* of affection or esteem; but, that it was upon their hearts to attempt the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom; still shewing the greatest deference to the church and Elders. — He advised them to signify their desire to the church in a letter, which, if the Elders approved of it, might be publickly read in a church assembly. — Accordingly they wrote as follows:

“ To

“ To the beloved church of Christ, whereof we,
 “ whose names are underwritten, are members;
 “ and to our much honoured Elders, who have
 “ taken the care of us in the Lord :

“ HONOURED AND BELOVED,

“ WE hope we shall always adore the God of
 “ all grace, who hath given us a name within his
 “ house; and that we shall never give you the
 “ least occasion to doubt of our dearest love and
 “ tenderest regard. Of your fervent love to us, we
 “ have always had the most convincing tokens. —
 “ Some time ago (a time we can never forget !)
 “ our honoured Elders moved, that the church di-
 “ vide itself into several distinct churches, for the
 “ enlargement of the Redeemer’s kingdom. Having
 “ then not duly weighed the wisdom and import-
 “ ance of that motion, we opposed it. But since
 “ then we have seen great reason to conclude, that
 “ the design must be of God; though the time of
 “ its execution was not then fully ripe. We, whose
 “ names are underwritten, with due submission, hum-
 “ bly think, that we should engage as a particular
 “ church, to strengthen and enlarge the interest of
 “ our Lord and Saviour: And it is our humble
 “ desire, if you think fit, that you would dismiss
 “ us for, and assist us in the work, so much laid upon
 “ the hearts of

“ Your very affectionate brethren, &c. ”

Epenetus. The Elders approved of this letter, and
 the very first opportunity, in a full church meeting,
 it was read: And, though there were many tears
 about it, (they being affectionately desirous of each
 other’s

other's communion) yet the church judged it *expedient* to comply with their desire: And, upon this, *Yefan* read the following dismissal:

“ WE, the church of Christ at *Caerludd*, having,
“ under the precious smiles of heaven, met with
“ success in the Lord, must say, that he hath made
“ our cup to *run over*; and having received a request from our dear brethren and sisters, — *naming*
“ *them* — that we would dismiss them as a separate
“ church; — having also considered the reasonableness of such a request, we now give them up
“ to the Lord, as holy and beloved, and to each
“ other according to his will: Hereby declaring,
“ that whenever they agree to walk together, as
“ a church of Christ, in the faith and order of
“ the gospel, their church membership here ceases,
“ and they are become our sister church, for whom
“ we shall ever wish true peace and prosperity.”

Yefan. If you do, as a church of Christ, acknowledge this dismissal as your act, signify it by lifting up your hands: — *Which they unanimously did*; — though with many tears. It was immediately signed by the Elders and many of the Brethren.

Epenetus. In a very little time the *other branch* followed their example, and were dismissed in like manner; and solemnly entered into covenant, as separate churches. And to make their solemnities yet more solemn, they sent for messengers from *Hyfrydle*, who, when they came, rejoiced greatly to see the increase, and helped them much in the Lord. —

They also quickly had their *Pastors, Teachers, Ruling*

Elders and Deacons, whose ordination was in the same manner, with that of those already mentioned.

Christophilus. It may indeed be said of them, that God did comfort them as one is comforted of his mother; — and that he made them to rejoice with great joy — the joy of God's nation, which strangers intermeddle not with. — But, as *imperfect*, and being as yet in the *world*, they doubtless had their *trials* and *afflictions* also.

Epenetus. Trials they had, and heavy ones too; but they endeavoured to observe the laws of their dearest Lord therein, and so far enjoyed tranquility under them.

Philalethes. I hope, dear *Epenetus*, at another opportunity, you will favour us with the account thereof. At present time fails us: — May all new-covenant [blessings attend us, and all the Israel of God!]

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE V.

The preaching Elders' visits. One day in the week set apart for receiving christian visits. One day in the week spent in visiting the church members, where they thought most needful. Their manner of receiving those visits. A brief account of the work of one of the days at the Pastor's house. An account of the Teacher's work on such a day. An account of the Pastor's visits to several members, in various circumstances. An account of the Teacher's visits.

THEOPHILUS.

WHAT admirable beauty there is in variety!—What variety in the worlds above us! how are the heavens stretched forth! how is the stelliferous space garnished with lights of different magnitude! how are the clouds supported, and made a weight for the wind! how does our God make small the drops of rain, and order us the great rain of his strength. Sometimes the God of glory thundereth, and his voice upon many waters divideth the flames of fire! And in all this variety, what exquisite beauty!

Christophilus. And I may say, what variety in this *teraqueous globe*, wherein we dwell! The great waters and the dry land, how amazing and delightful! The

mountains and the plains, in endless variety, how entertaining! The monsters of the deep, with creeping things innumerable, from the mightiest animal to the meanest insect, give pleasure to a contemplative mind, — which is still heightened by the variety observed. And to say no more, *Potheina's* green, *Potheina's* groves, — not to mention *Potheina's* Gardens, — afford such beautiful variety, as may administer perpetual pleasure, and profitable instruction.

Philalethes. I beg leave to add, that the same beautiful variety may be seen in the dispensations of *Providence*, governing the world. — If we view the rise, the reign, and the ruin of Empires, — domestic revolutions, — the different circumstances of the children of men, from the most potent prince to the poorest beggar — from tender infancy to aged labour and sorrow, (p) — we shall be surrounded with amazing wonders. — But, what renders the whole more wonderful, it is possible for persons under widely differing circumstances, to be *equally* happy. Oh, how beautiful will providence appear at last, when for ought I know, we shall be enabled to take a view of the whole piece, filled with nothing but harmony and consent!

Epenetus. If uniform variety constitutes beauty, it may be seen in a church of *Christ* in this world. Fathers, young men, and children, — publick and private worship, — praises and prayers, — rejoicing and mourning, — reproving, exhorting, and forbearing one another in love, — diversities of gifts, and differences of administrations, — officers and members, — all

all standing in need of one another, acting in subserviency to the glory of Christ, and each other's happiness.

Theophilus. At the close of our last conference, we heard of *comfort* and *trials* which attended the church at *Caerludd*. If our beloved *Epenetus* would give us particular instances of the several officers in the church, discharging their duty towards families and individuals, it would, if I mistake not, happily exemplify *Social Religion*, in that beautiful and instructive variety we have been admiring.

Epenetus. I did design something of that; — but I am obliged to you for the hint. — I would have you then observe, that *one fixed day* in the week the *preaching Elders* always kept at home (unless something very urgent happened) to receive the christian visits of any of the church members, who had a desire to speak with them: And *one day* in the week they spent in visiting the church members, where they thought most needful.

Christophilus. Pray, *Epenetus*, give us some account of the former: Why was it *fixed*, and how was it ordinarily spent?

Epenetus. It was fixed, that any of the members that wanted to speak with either *Pastor* or *Teacher*, might know when and where to have open access to either of them. — It was spent thus: — Family duties being over, at *ten o'clock* there was an open door for any person under soul-concern. After a suitable prayer, questions and cases were stated and considered, till near three o'clock in the afternoon; — when the whole was concluded with prayer for a blessing on what they had been concerned in; — par-

ticular cases were prayed over; with thanksgivings to the great Shepherd of *Israel*. Then the poor who were present, were always welcome to a plain refreshment with their Pastor or Teacher, which the church considered and provided for, that their hospitality might not be hurtful.

Neophytus. Pray, *Epenetus*, give us an instance.

Epenetus. You must observe then, that one day, at the usual hour, several being come to *Devi's* house, he—having in a very affectionate manner prayed for freedom to express in the fear of God what was on their minds,—addressed them as follows:

Devi. My dear brethren and sisters in the Lord: What a mercy it is, that we are seekers of another country, that is, an heavenly one! And though we have here no continuing city, yet God is not ashamed to be called our God, because he hath prepared for us a city. We are through grace upon the road to it, and being strangers and sojourners, as all our fathers were, must expect a variety of circumstances by the way—darkness, crooked things, and rough places;—but you know who has promised to make darkness light, crooked things straight, and rough places plain. (q)—I desire now you would be free, and tell me how does the Eternal Spirit, our gracious guide and comforter, deal with your souls?

A BROTHER, whose name was *Cresyddol*, said, My dear Pastor, I have for some time been under discouragement of soul. It is said in the word, *That those who are planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in his courts.* (r) When I compare present

times

(q) *Ija*. xi. 4.

(r) *Psa*. xlii. 3.

times and enjoyments with the past, I cannot see that I grow at all. It is written, *They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine*; (s) but I seem to make no progress in religion; and this consideration, night and day, draws a cloud over all my comforts.

Dewi. My dear brother, to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, is a very great mercy; and I must say it is also a great *mystery*. You are called to live by faith upon God's word, when thousands of discouragements from what you *feel* may fly in your face. True growth in grace can be found out only in the light of faith, and faith looks only to Christ. We are too prone to build all our encouragement on frames; and I sometimes think this will stick by me as long as I live. — Dear brother, the Lord increase your faith.

Crefyddol. Ay, dear Sir, that is what I want; but I see the increase of nothing.

Dewi. But what if I should tell you, that your growth appears to others, though not to yourself? — Another day will discover, that mourning under a sense of backwardness is to go forward, and, that bemoaning one's self for want of growth, is growing in grace.

Crefyddol. Perhaps I might think so of another: *Quicksets* grow; — but I am like a *dry stick* set in ground. — I cannot tell you my case, though I came with that design.

Dewi. One of the promises you mentioned says, that we should *grow as the vine*. Did you ever observe

(s) *Hof.* xiv. 7.

serve a vine in winter? Have you not seen it late in the spring without a leaf, when many other trees are green and flourishing? And must you, my dear brother, meet with no *winter*?

Crefyddol. What you say, my dear Pastor, makes me hope there is life. But it has been a long winter with me.

Dewi. It is God alone must determine the length and weight of our discouragements. — But how is it with you, as to the *means* of life and growth? All sin is like the worm at *Jenah's* gourd.

Crefyddol. God is pleased to keep me back from presumptuous sins, and to give me some degree of watchfulness against all appearance of evil. A loose vain conversation is what my soul abhors: And as to reading, meditation, and prayer, I perform them in some poor measure; but I want to abound therein with delight. The publick institutions of Christ, through his mercy, I forsake not, though I am very imperfect and sinful in every thing.

Dewi. And, pray, what thoughts have you, from day to day, of the Person, fulness, grace and salvation of Christ?

Crefyddol. I wish I could find more love to him. — That is my affliction, — when I plainly see, that *he is altogether lovely,* — and worthy of my strongest affections, and the most ardent love, and I so sinfully indifferent and unconcerned about it.

Dewi. Ah, my dear brother! so far as I know any thing of the christian religion, you are now under the kind influences of heaven, growing up into Christ. To grow in grace is to become a little child; — to grow out of self into Christ, and so become strong

strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and whatever our fruit be, to bring it forth in Christ, having no confidence in the flesh. Be not cast down; God hath dealt bountifully with you. It is wonderful grace, that you and I are not left to be utterly unconcerned about godliness and growth. — Abound in prayer, abound in praises; you have abundant reason for both. The more thankful you are, the more reason still you will find for thankfulness.

Cresyddol. I return you thanks, dear Sir, for your kind advice. I shall no longer hinder others; but must humbly beg your prayers.

Neophytus. Well, I see, by this account, it is possible a person may grow in grace and not know it; — grow in grace and decay in gifts. For it is growing little in one's own sight; — seeking self less; — leaning on self less, — and so growing out of self into Christ.

Epenetus. While *Dewi* was reasoning with *Cresyddol*, a sister present, whose name was *Tyner*, seemed by her countenance, and her many tears, to be under some more than common depression of spirit: Come, Sister *Tyner*, said *Dewi*, how is it in your soul? *Woman, why weepest thou?*

Tyner. Ah, my dear Pastor, I could almost answer as she did; — “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where to find him.” What shall I say? My sins have separated between me and him. If there be such a thing as falling from grace, I am afraid that is my case. The brother that spoke, complained for want of *growth*; but I think I am *dead*. — Heretofore, I had freedom before God in prayer; no sooner did I approach him, but I thought

His heart was open to me: I was admitted, as it were, into the bosom of my Heavenly father, while I was melted down into penitential joy; but now I am like a child (if indeed I am one) shut out of doors.—At the Lord's supper I used to be entertained with the children's bread; but of late have been tempted to forsake the table, and come to it no more. In hearing the word I alone, seemingly, am like *Gideon's* fleece.—As for my daily thoughts, they are barren, confused, tullen and uncomfortable. She broke off abruptly, with many tears, nor was there a dry eye in all the company. But after some time said

Dewi. You say your sins have separated between you and the Lord; we have all in some measure experienced, that sin is of a separating nature, and I must say it would separate eternally, only the merciful and faithful God will not suffer his people so to sin, as that it should have dominion over them.—But what sin do you apprehend it was that led you into such a distance from the Lord?

Tyner. Through mercy I have been always kept from what persons call gross immoralities: But though my acquaintance have nothing to charge me with, I have a great deal to charge myself with. But the sin, which was the forerunner of this dark state, was a being carnally pleased with what I esteemed spiritual enjoyments. I thought other persons valued me, and thereupon I overvalued myself; and at that very door my present calamity entered: With that came indifference,—distrust as to the things of this life,—and then of life and salvation. From these things I have been often ready to conclude, that I

was

was never put among the children: However, the presence of the Father of lights I have not, for I walk in darkness that may be felt.

Dewi. I sympathize with you; for I think I am, as you said, often like a child shut out of doors; — but your great relief lies in this, that you have a *Pastor* in heaven that fellow-feels, is able to succour, and will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able; and though you may be like one shut up and walled in, he will make a way to escape. Trust in his name, though you walk in darkness; among the *children* he hath fixed you; to dwell, I trust, in the house for ever.

Tyner. Dear Sir, I have tried to content myself with concluding all will be safe at last; but I cannot be so satisfied: There is something which I want, day and night, and have not. I cannot help lamenting after the Lord; and when I sink into a dry indifference, then I think myself a thousand times worse than when in the dust I make the most bitter lamentation.

Dewi. You make me think of the church who sought her beloved, but found him not, — of *Job*, who sought him on all hands, but could not find him; — of *David*, whose soul was cast down within him, — of *Heman*, who looked upon himself as free among the dead, — But all these were holy, beloved and safe; and so are you: And as one of them said, “When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold,” (t) so I trust you will lose nothing but the dross.

Tyner. Sir, I hope God will make me very willing to lose that. Some of the instances you mentioned I have thought of, with a *may be* I am among the children, and shall be there for ever: But, as I said before, my present condition I am neither willing nor able to bear.

Dewi. God does not require any person to be willing to dwell at a distance from him. To be willing to be without God, is a very great sin against him: But the best advice I can offer, while your great deliverance tarries, take as follows:

CONSIDER yourself as every way insufficient, and exceeding sinful. Consider Christ as infinitely great and good,—*able to save to the uttermost.* (u) Begin at the door by which you say your calamity entered, and set apart some solemn time to humble yourself under a sense of that pride, carnality and unbelief that seized your heart, and be very particular therein before the Lord. Then look unto your Father's name, and try if you can read it. For instance (*Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7.*) "Gracious and merciful, abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." Or, (*Jer. xxiii. 6.*) "Jehovah our righteousness." Though you walk in darkness and have no light, yet trust in that *name of the Lord.* (w) And if you are so put to it as to question the truth of all the work passed upon your soul;—come as a perishing sinner to Christ, who says, *Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out;* (x) a course my soul has often found useful. Then keep close to the duties of prayer, reading and meditation; and

(u) *Heb. vii. 27* — (w) *Isa. I. 10,* (x) *John vi. 37,*

and wait on the Lord still in all his publick institutions: And though *weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning.* (y)

Tyner. Sir, I shall endeavour to take your tender advice, but to wait upon the Lord at his table, in such a frame as mine is at present, seems to be attended with many difficulties.

Dewi. If that ordinance were to be attended to, by ministers and people, *only* when they are in good frames; how often, think you, would the churches in the world commemorate their Lord's death, according to his command! When the *ministers* are in good and desirable frames, the people may not be so; when the *people* are in a good frame, it may be otherwise with the ministers. Christ never confined his people's duty to their frames. All who cast their salvation upon Christ, whatever be their frames, are bound in duty to commemorate their Lord's death; and *one* cold, indifferent step in this, may lead to a *thousand*: Therefore, dear sister, omit no duty.

Tyner. I am glad you are acquainted with my case; I know you are a tender servant of the compassionate Redeemer. May my soul go on in the strength of the Lord, come wind, come weather! but Oh! may the sun shine, may the sun shine, if it be the Lord's will!

Neophytus. I am glad it was thus with some of the saints in times past. Though I have made no great progress in the ways of religion, yet I find

here

(y) *Psa.* xxx, 5.

here some things I have been exercised with, and could mention to nobody,—but am now refreshed.

Epenetus. The next that spoke was one *Kon*, now, at least, a cheerful brother: Says he, to *Dewi* his Pastor, Dear Sir, I have met, in my short course of Christianity, with a variety of circumstances, frames and trials—sometimes comforted, and sometimes dejected—but I must set up my *Ebenexer*, and say, hitherto I am helped. Last Lord's day, in your discourse, you mentioned that text, *Heb. vii. 24.* *But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.* Every word of it refreshed me. The consideration of his being *man*, as well as the mighty God, was of great use to me. Thought I, how highly is our *nature* dignified! higher than that of angels! And then his continuing *ever*;—even when all relations die, all enjoyments vanish,—when the most desirable frames vary, and a thousand deaths may attend our most earnest expectations! And I was led with holy amazement, to consider his *unchangeable priesthood*. Oh, I can never express the joys of faith upon those blessed truths! I had gone through discouraging days, but thus the Lord seasonably stepped in to my relief.—I thought myself bound to tell you what God had done for my soul.

Dewi. It refreshes me to hear it, and to the God of all grace I would be thankful. And who knows but this may be of greater use to our dejected friends here, than any thing I have said. But, dear brother, such comforts as your's, are always attended with other concomitant fruits of the Holy Spirit: How do you find it?

Kon:

Kon. Sir, through grace, my soul is led to God as my chief good; I am made to mourn in the dust under a sense of my exceeding sinfulness, and to admire grace, that ever I should be made to know any thing of Christ, as my salvation; — I am taught to love every duty; dearly to love the kingdom of Christ, and the children of God; and earnestly to desire the good of all my poor fellow-sinners, hating my own sins and their's.

Devi. My dear brother, all this is right: May your soul and mine be brought into more abundant acquaintance therewith! Make it the great business of your life, to express your thankfulness to God in a holy, humble, close and useful walk with him, in every relation and circumstance in life.

Nephtus. The love and labour of this *Pastor*, lead me to think of the apostle's expression, *We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.* (2) But how great must the tenderness and love of the great *Pastor* be! I remember he tells his people, that they should be comforted, as one is comforted of his mother. (a) But pray, *Epenetus*, what further account can you give us of that day's work?

Epenetus. The next that spoke was a certain woman, whose name was *Tawil*; who came to have some discourse with the *Pastor*, in order to be propounded for communion.

STR. said she, I came upon a business of great importance; what a few months ago I had no thought of, but now it takes up all my thoughts. I think myself bound, though weak, to take the yoke of Christ

(2) 1 *Thim.* ii, 7.(a) *Isa.* lvi, 13.

Christ upon me, believing his word that I shall find it easy. (b) And I desire I may, while I live, bear my testimony for Christ, as my saviour and Lord; and I think I cannot do that, as his word requires, without being in church-fellowship.

Dewi. Are you a believer in Christ?

Tawel. Sir, I hope, through grace, that I am.

Dewi. What do you apprehend faith in Christ to be?

Tawel. Sir, I do not know whether I can answer you right; but I think it is, to trust him with all that concerns my salvation.

Dewi. What is it that puts you upon that trust?

Tawel. Truly, Sir, I have had many discouragements, and I did often think I could never come at it, and at last dropt all hope and expectation; and ere I was aware, I found my heart carried forth to trust in Christ.

Dewi. What were those discouragements you met with?

Tawel. I thought I was such a vile, unworthy sinner, that he would have nothing to do with me.

Dewi. What made your sins appear so great to you?

Tawel. While I was yet in *Heathenism*, I did many things which my conscience told me I should not do; and when I heard of Christ, I despised him. When I was struck with conviction that I was undone without him, I opposed those convictions, and endeavoured to stifle them: Then my evils appeared innumerable, and what added to my hor-

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ror was, that all those evils proceeded from a nature universally defiled.

Dewi. And what do you think of it now?

Tawel. Oh! dear Sir, I think worse and worse of it: I am vile and sinful throughout.

Dewi. Then if the greatness of your sins discouraged you from believing, and if you to appear yourself more and more sinful, how dare you believe or trust at all?

Tawel. It is not a month since I heard you preach from a text, which, I hope, I shall never forget:—*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief:* (c) And you made it plain that Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;—that he came to seek and to save that which was lost;—and that he was a *Physician* for the sick and wounded;—that the rest would not value him, and that whoever trusted in him, did so as the chief of sinners.

Dewi. What makes you think, that he is a fit person to be trusted for salvation by the chief of sinners?

Tawel. Because he is the mighty God, and hath everlasting strength; and because he hath assumed our nature, suffered and made satisfaction for sin, and because it is his very office and business to save.

Dewi. But what encourages you to trust him?

Tawel. He says, *Whoever cometh, he will in no wise cast him out.*

Dewi.

(c) 1 Tim. i. 15.

Dewi. Does this trust then lead you to a neglect of any duty, that God requires in his word?

Tawel. No, dear Sir, this trust puts me upon all duty to God and man; and particularly it excites a desire to be found in my duty as a church member.

Dewi. And how did the first concern begin?

Tawel. In hearing, accidentally, two *Christians* talk about salvation through Jesus Christ; and one of them said, that all the world was undone, and that there was no help but in Christ. Then, as I said, I was struck with conviction, but opposed it:—Yet such was the grace of God to me, I was still followed. So I thought I would go and hear the *Christian Teachers*, and in hearing it was made plain to me, that I was undone by nature and practice. I tried, in my poor way, to pray for help and salvation; but my difficulties and discouragements increased, till I heard you preach from the text I mentioned: (1 *Tim.* i. 15.) Then God was pleased to open my heart to receive the things delivered. Renouncing *Heathenism* before you, Sir, and this company, I profess myself, through grace, a believer in Christ Jesus, and desire to be baptized, that I may be propounded, as soon as you please, to the church.—Then said

Dewi. “Can any forbid water that she should not be baptized?”—And she was baptized straightway.—Upon this a sister of the church, whose name was *Afud*, spoke to her Pastor as follows:

Afud. Sir, with a thankful heart I own the mercy of God, and my soul rejoiceth in his salvation: For it has not only powerfully entered my heart, but
graciously

graciously entered my house. Here is my dear boy *Ufudd*, not yet twelve years old, come to tell you what God has done for his soul; with an earnest desire to be admitted to the Lord's table.

Dewi. My dear child, though this is not the first time I have had talk with you, what thoughts have you of Jesus Christ?

Ufudd. Sir, I cannot tell you; but he is always in my thoughts night and day. I think he is almighty, and my all-sufficient Saviour; and in his worship, he fills me with comfort.

Dewi. How came you to know that you stood in need of a Saviour?

Ufudd. My mother, Sir, always used to tell me I was a sinner, that I was born in sin; and my father constantly, in family duty, did mourn over his children, as by nature children of *wrath*, even as others. His words often went to my heart; and though I quickly forgot what he said, and what I felt, yet when new concern came, I thought what they said was very true, because I did so forget God and myself.

Dewi. But how is it with you now?

Ufudd. Sir, one time my mother took me into her chamber, and bolted the door; — I thought she was going to *chastise* me for some fault, but she said unto me, — “ My poor child, I travail in birth for thee; thou art ruined and undone by sin; thy tender mother cannot save thee, thy dear father cannot save thee, all the world cannot save thee. Thou art under sin, and guilty before God; evil shall not dwell with him; except thou art born again, thou canst not see the kingdom of hea-

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"ven;" and with that burst out into cries and tears, which I thought would break my heart. After a while she directed me to the places of scripture she had mentioned, and went to prayer with me; with many tears begged a blessing on what she had said, shewed me the tenderest love and pity, and so went out of the room.

Dewi. And how was it with you when you were left?

Ufudd. I trembled much, and endeavoured to look upon the scriptures that she left with me, but I could not have any distinct thoughts upon them; only they all seemed to lie hard upon me: And my sins were so set before my face, that I could see nothing else. I had despised prayer, though my parents always told me I should pray. I had neglected reading, and stifled good thoughts: And in the publick assemblies I never used to mind the worship of God, but *trifle* away the time in looking about me or sleeping. But now I saw innumerable evils compassing me about, and all those proceeding from a very *corrupt nature*. I saw that what my mother said was very true, that I was indeed ruined and undone.

Dewi. And what did you do then?

Ufudd. Sir, I bemoaned myself, and prayed to the Lord, that he would turn and save me. And though I did say something like prayers often before, yet I was never *afraid* to pray till then. I thought I was too great a sinner, and that God would strike me dead if I offered to speak to him. But I thought if I did not pray, I must perish; so I threw myself

self on the ground (recollecting the *publican* and his prayer) and cried and prayed in great distress.

Dewi. And how was your distress removed?

Ufudd. I kept in the chamber all that afternoon, somewhat indisposed in body, and still more so in my soul; and my mother came frequently to me and spoke to me what she thought best. In the evening, the family being called together, says my father, "What is the matter with this boy? is he not well?" Says my mother, "I hope he is under some concern about his soul." But I can never tell you how it was with my father that evening in prayer; and while he prayed in a particular manner for me, I found my heart made *willing* to receive Christ as my Saviour, and to choose God as my God. After prayer, my father took me to him, and said, Come, my poor child, how is it with thee? For tears I could make no reply;—but after some time I said, Dear father, I am willing to be *saved* by Christ, I am willing to *serve* Christ.

Dewi. And I suppose you are in the same mind still.

Ufudd. Yes, Sir, through grace, and have been ever since, and I hope shall be, as long as I live.

Dewi. Have you met with no discouragements since that time?

Ufudd. Yes, Sir, many; from my own wretched sinful heart, that spoils every thing I do; and was once sorely tried about *Election*.

Dewi. Pray, how was that?

Ufudd. I had often heard of *Election* in publick sermons, and sometimes in the school, in our master *Edgar's* opening the principles of religion to us, and
I had

I had read of it in the scriptures; but a dark thought passed through my mind, what if I am not *elect*? I mourned under it, but could not have the freedom to tell any body how it was with me: But one Lord's day, lately, you touched upon my very case, as if I had told it you; and you observed, "That it was a poor sinner's immediate business to make his calling sure, and as a perishing sinner, venture all upon Christ; to begin at the foot of *Jacob's ladder*, and not at the top; and finding himself among the *called*, he may then fairly infer that he is *elect*," and through grace I found your advice very profitable.

Dewi. And what makes you desire to be admitted to the Lord's table.

Ufudd. I think there is a great glory upon a church of Christ partaking of that ordinance, in remembrance of their Lord's love and death: He *commands* his converted people thus to shew forth his death: I hope I am willing to serve Christ; but serve him I cannot without *keeping his commandments*.

Dewi. You have been baptized in your infancy, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Ufudd. I humbly bless God for it; and adore the *Name* of the Eternal God, in his three glorious Persons.

Dewi. My dear child, the Lord, I hope, will cause you to flourish in his courts: I shall, God willing, propound you to the church the first opportunity.

Neophytus. But here are very few questions asked upon their doctrinal acquaintance with the principles of religion.

Epenetus,

Epenetus. That is not because *Devi* neglected them, but because I designedly omitted them, lest I should burthen you with repetitions. Three things, in receiving members, they very strictly required; — sound knowledge, unfeigned faith, and a holy conversation.

THUS I have given you a brief account of that day's work.

Christophilus. But I cannot help observing, how necessary it is, that those who preach the gospel should be godly converted persons themselves! What could a moral unbelieving preacher (notwithstanding his doctrinal acquaintance with systems of divinity) have done with these? — Oh! it makes me send up my earnest desires to the Father of lights, for a mighty blessing upon the religious views and contributions of our generous and honourable society, the glory of London; and I may add, all other liberal encouragers of a converted ministry, and vital godliness. But pray, *Epenetus*, had not the Teacher a similar day and concern?

Epenetus. He had; the very same day in the week, on the same hours, and observed in the same method; and in the evening of the day, *Devi* and *Tesan* always met to impart to each other the sum and substance of the work they had been that day concerned in. Thus they were brought into great acquaintance with the state of the flock, which was attended with great usefulness. * — And seeing you desire

* "We that are ministers (says a venerable Briton, the reverend and holy Mr. *Walter Cradock*) should, in all our ministerial works, propose some solid spiritual scope, or end, to our ministry,

desire to hear some part of the *Teacher's* work on such a day, you may take it thus: Some company being come, and prayer to God made, *Yefan* spoke as follows:

DEAR

"ministry, and to *every part* of it,—I have known (adds he)
 "many learned, godly, and otherwise able ministers, who took much
 "pains, preached solidly, and yet in the end reaped little or no ap-
 "parent fruit of all their labour: Some of them professing in their
 "old age, They knew not the soul that ever was brought home
 "to Christ by their ministry. And this to my apprehension
 "seemed to be the chief reason, as to the work of man,—they
 "never did propose any particular *end*, or distinct *scope*, to their
 "work,—which indeed they *could not* well do, as having no spiri-
 "tual acquaintance with the *states and conditions* of their auditors.
 "He that would convert sinners, or edify saints, ought to study
 "souls as well as books. And those ministers I have observed
 "to work most excellently, and labour most successfully, who
 "have been accustomed to converse most with their hearers. As
 "our frequent, familiar, spiritual *converse* with our hearers doth
 "furnish us with more *skill* to deal with the souls of others; so
 "it conduces much to the *quickening* of our own: (*Rom. i. 11. 12.*)
 "Without which, shooting as it were at rovers, we must often
 "miss the mark: Without which, we are as expert smiths, that
 "make *curious* keys, and never consult with the wards of the
 "lock; whereas a rude, ill-shaped key, fitted to the lock, is
 "of *more use* than the other.—It was once a speech of a reve-
 "rend Minister (Mr. *Wrotb*, sometimes stiled the Apostle of
 "South-Wales) who, because of the multitude of his hearers, was
 "often necessitated to preach in the church-yard,—‘That there
 "was not one person in that congregation whose spiritual state
 "he did not know,’ and the success of his work was, an-
 "swerably, exceedingly great and glorious: ‘Neither (said he)
 "is there any sermon I preach, wherein I teach them not at
 "least *one lesson* more than any one of them all knew before;
 "and yet I learn from them throughout the week, as much or
 "more than they do of me on the Lord's day.”

DEAR brethren and sisters in our Lord, He is faithful who hath told the church, *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.*—How great an honour hath our God conferred upon us, that he hath numbered us among his disciples,—placed us among his children,—given us the sure word of prophecy, as a light shining in a dark place,—and the promise of his Spirit to lead us into all truth! Unto this, one present replied, whose name was

Gofalus. And, dear Sir, what a mercy it is, that the Spirit of God owns such familiar means, as humble conference upon the things of God, for our instruction! But I am slow to receive, and weak to retain what I hear, even upon the most important subjects.—Pray, Sir, what may I strictly call a covenant?

Yefan. An agreement between two parties, equally free to choose or refuse.

Gofalus. What is the covenant of grace?

Yefan. An agreement between God the Father and the Son, upon the great concern of our salvation.

Gofalus. And pray, Sir, how am I to consider the parties in this covenant?

Yefan. God the Father, as offended on the account of sin, yet graciously proposing to his own Son, (the same in nature and essence but now considered as Mediator for man) terms, on the accomplishment whereof the elect should be saved: And God the Son, as second Adam, and head of the elect, accepting the proposed terms, and undertaking the mighty work.

Gofalus. And pray what were those terms more
K expressly

expressly, and the *reward* upon the performance of them?

Yefan. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." (d) "We see *Jesus*, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." (e)

Gofalus. This looks like a covenant of *works*.

Yefan. So it is unto *Christ*; and our Lord's obedience unto death was meritorious in the highest sense: For he, who is the Eternal God, assumed our nature, and *purchased the church with his own blood*. (f) Yet, with regard to us, it is a covenant of rich grace and mercy altogether.

Gofalus. Pray, what part does our *faith* bear in that covenant?

Yefan. Only a *blessing* of the covenant, attended with many other concomitant blessings. "For unto you it is *given*, in the behalf of *Christ*, to *believe* on him." (g)

Gofalus. But you said, a covenant is an agreement between two parties, equally *free* to choose and refuse.

Yefan. Such is a covenant in a proper and *strict* acceptation; but God's covenant with us is a *mere promise* of absolute grace, even the sure mercies of *David*.

Gofalus. Will you please to give me an instance, where the covenant of God must be taken in this *last* acceptation of the word?

Yefan:

(d) *Isa.* liii. 10. (e) *Heb.* ii. 9. (f) *Act.* xx. 28. (g) *Phil.* i. 29.

Yefan. "But this shall be the covenant that I
 "will make with the house of Israel, After those
 "days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their
 "inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and
 "will be their God, and they shall be my peo-
 "ple" (h)

Gofalus. Blessed be the Lord, I hope I do in
 some measure see how it is,—all *grace* freely given,
 and every *duty* wisely and graciously provided for.
 Pray, what was the covenant in the wilderness?

Yefan. A veiled dispensation of this everlasting
 covenant of grace.

Gofalus. Are all God's people, under all the
 variety of circumstances attending them, still in this
 covenant?

Yefan. Yes, it stands fast, and cannot be broken.
 — But remember, that the *secret of the Lord is with*
them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.

Gofalus. May my soul walk and worship in faith
 and filial fear more than ever, that I may receive
 clearer views still of this blessed covenant! — I return
 you thanks, dear Sir, for your condescending labour
 of love; it hath been *refreshing*, and I hope will
 be *establishing* to my soul, and for this I beg your
 prayers.

Neophytus. What a concise, comfortable account
 is this of the covenant of grace! Made with *Christ*
 as head of the elect; while he performed the con-
 ditions, and rendered all promises *yea* and *amen*!
 How hath my poor mind been perplexed in reading
 large, confused, inconsistent treatises upon the co-
 venant, including twenty puzzling things! Some

K 2

making

(h) *Jer.* xxi, 33.

making it a downright covenant of *works*, and some a *mixed* one, and some as many distinct covenants as there are believers in the whole world!

Philologus. The Holy Spirit expresseth God's covenant of grace by (*διαθήκη*) a word which implies a *testamentary disposition*; no bargaining terms, but free bequeathments: All the blessings of the covenant come so to us, and all our duties are new-covenant *blessings*. It is amazing that any of the *godly* should ever fix upon *faith* and *repentance* as the *conditions* of a proper covenant between God and us; and call that a covenant of grace!

Syllogisticus. And I must say, that it is amazing any man of *sense* should do it, who grants that persons by nature are dead in trespasses and sins, under the dominion of a carnal mind, which is enmity against God.

Neophytus. But why doth the Lord say, I will make a covenant with *you*, or with *them*, seeing it is a covenant *already* made?

Philalethes. When the Lord says, " I will make with you an everlasting covenant," no more is intended than *making manifest*. So *Psalms* lxxxix. 27. " I will make him my first born, higher than the kings of the earth," speaking of Christ; that is, I will make him *known* to be such.

Theophilus. This covenant contains *all my salvation and all my desire*. Let my God smile, or let him frown; let him shine upon me, or call darkness to pass over me; let him more than answer my expectations, or command disappointments to surround me; let him renew my youth like the eagle's, or with strong pains afflict me; — still I am within his covenant, for all these things are *blessings* thereof.

Epenetus.

Epenetus. God is ever mindful of his covenant, and he bids us remember it; and I hope the Eternal Spirit will establish our souls in the faith of interest in all its blessings!

I now pass on to another brother, whose name was *Egwan*. Sir, said he, I was the other day thinking with myself, how weak and feeble my faith was: Yet I found *desires* to believe. That text came into my mind, *They that know thy Name will put their trust in thee*. I took the word *trust* to be the same as *faith*, and thought, that the ready way to more *faith*, was to get more acquaintance with the Lord's Name; and looking over some of the blessed Names he takes to himself in the scriptures, I came to that in *Jer. xxiii. 6.* *And this is his Name wheremy he shall be called, JEHOVAH our righteousness.* Dear Sir, please to help me to understand that name.

Yefan. It is, dear brother, the name of *Christ* the *Messiah*, as is evident from the foregoing verse; and in it you have two things for the support of your faith; *first*, what *Christ* is in himself; *secondly*, what he is to us. In himself he is JEHOVAH; unto us he is a glorious *righteousness*. The name JEHOVAH is God's *peculiar* name, and it would be the greatest blasphemy to call any mere creature thereby. But *Christ* hath the name and the Eternal Nature intended by it.

Egwan. Ah! dear Sir, though I am a poor weak soul, I would say of him, *My Lord and my God*. Let him be never so great, if he be not the eternal God, I durst not trust him. It is idolatry to trust any creature, however exalted.

Yefan. Under a sense, then, of all our weakness and wretchedness, let us say, *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength*; and here is a blessed name indeed, to which we may have constant recourse, **JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

Egwan. Dear Sir, I thank you; I will go in the strength of the Lord God, and will make mention of his righteousness, even of his only.

Epenetus. Then a sister present, whose name was *Cariadus*, told *Yefan* with many tears, that her husband *Duwio* was from day to day under great heaviness of mind, which she could not fully relate, but desired *Yefan* to come the first opportunity to visit him; which he said he would.—And after some more discourse, this visiting exercise was concluded with prayer.

Christophilus. Our beloved *Epenetus*, I return you many thanks for the account you have given us of the visits they received at home, and now humbly request the favour of some account of their visits abroad.

Epenetus. Most willingly, my dear *Christophilus*: You may remember I told you before, that one day in the week they used for visiting the flock, especially those who stood in most need of christian visits.—On these occasions they studiously avoided such a *misimprovement* of their precious time as would turn to the disadvantage of themselves and others. They were servants of Christ.—I shall begin, as I did before, with *Dewi*; who, on one of these days, entering the house of *Cyfiarwn*, of whom you have heard something before, said, my dear brother *Cyfiarwn*, how do you do?

Cyfiarwn.

Cyfarwn. O my dear Pastor, I am glad to see you. Through grace, God deals bountifully with me; I find *his ways are pleasantness, and his paths are peace.* He is pleased to impart strength to my soul, and makes all my duties a delight unto me. Though I am not always alike, yet I find he never leaves me. In the face of all my sinfulness under which I daily mourn, I am enabled to appeal to his mercy, in a measure of faith. Through abundant grace, he pours into my soul, foretastes of a future rest. And I: Lord's day, while in prayer you mentioned that scripture, *Enter into thy rest O my soul,* I thought I knew something of heaven in myself: And though it is not with me now as it was then, yet something of the favour remains, and the remembrance is sweet.

Dewi. Ah! my dear brother, our God is rich in mercy: I am refreshed to hear you thus speak of him. Religion is a reality, and that through grace our souls know. God sheds abroad his love in our hearts. Oh! the mercy that we are *no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens, with the saints, and of the household of God!* (i) How is it with your family, the little church under your care?

Cyfarwn. Sir, my dear wife is afflicted in body and mind; and I hope the Lord hath sent you seasonably hither, for her instruction and comfort. Pray, Sir, walk with me into the next room.

Dewi. My dear sister *Rhinweddol*; (for that was her name) how do you do?

Rhinweddol. Dear Sir, I am glad to see you; but I am afflicted in body, and attended with

K 4

pains

(i) *Ephs.* ii, 19.

pains now for some time. But the greatest pain of all is in my mind; for I think God must be angry with me, else he would not afflict me thus; and stand up under his displeasure I cannot.

Dewi. I unfeignedly pity you under your affliction; but the pity of a poor sinful worm is nothing, when compared with the compassions of your risen Redeemer. You have often heard that the people of God, while in this life, may be a poor and an afflicted people, who nevertheless trust in his name. And I hope the Spirit of Christ will help you to trust in the Lord, under all your pains, and say, as dear *Job* said, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*

Rhinweddol. Sir, it is distrust, that makes my affliction heavy. Hereby my spirit is wounded; and a wounded spirit who can bear?

Dewi. Distrust is an affliction only to children. An enemy is never afflicted with it, though under its dominion. He to whom distrust is a real affliction, is a child.

Rhinweddol. Oh! my dear Pastor, God has a controversy with me, and for my sins he afflicts me; and before his frowns and displeasure I cannot stand.

Dewi. It is certain, that when we get to our Lord, where sin enters not, we shall be afflicted no more; but at present, though afflictions may be called the frowns of God, especially when he also withdraws the light of his countenance, yet they are the frowns of a father, which are designed to take away our sin. I hope you are willing to lose that.

Rhinweddol. Yes, I hope I am; but I have not that zeal against it which I ought to have against God's enemy:

enemy: And that adds to my affliction also. I have a *complication* of afflictions, that I cannot account for; nor do I know how to stand up under it.

Dewi. Your heavenly Father, who afflicts in love, will not contend for ever, lest the spirit should fail before him, and the soul that he hath made. In wise love he afflicts, and in wise love he will relieve.

Rhinweddol. But can the hidings of his face from my soul be in love?

Dewi. Yes sure, else many of us would be often under wrath. The church sought her beloved, but *could not find him* (k) for he had withdrawn himself.

Rhinweddol. Oh may I but hope that all is in love, and that all will end well!

Dewi. He assures you in his word, that it is so: and as his poor servant I assure you it is so. *As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent.* (l) He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve you. In all your afflictions he is afflicted. But be of good cheer, submit to him and trust him: *You shall come forth as gold.* (m)

Rhinweddol. Though my soul be cast down in me, yet I would not refuse to be comforted. I would thankfully own, that what you say tends greatly to support me, and encourage my soul to draw near to God.—Dear Sir, pray for me, that I may glorify the name of my Saviour, under the present dispensation, that I may neither think dishonourably, nor speak disrespectfully of him, but patiently submit to his pleasure.—I thank you for your kind visit, and all that you have said; I hope there was in it a word in season spoken to my soul.

K 5

Dewi.

(k) Cant. iii, 1.

(l) Rev. iii, 19.

(m) Job xxiii. 10.

Dewi. Then it was the Lord that spoke it, and unto him I would have you be thankful. I hope, through his mercy, in a little time, to see your comforts abound in restored health. In the mean while may the Eternal Spirit, our gracious Comforter, greatly support you. — Pray where are your children?

Cyfaawn. Children, come in.

Dewi. Oh! my dear little boy, are you a good boy?

Prydferth (For that was his name) answered, No, Sir, I am naught all over,

Dewi. Who told you so, *Prydferth*?

Prydferth. My father and mother, Sir; and they have often proved it from the word of God, Sir.

Dewi. Do you remember the words that prove you to be naught all over, *Prydferth*?

Prydferth. Yes, Sir, some of them. "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh."

Dewi. How do you think to be saved from this dreadful condition, *Prydferth*?

Prydferth. Sir, I understand that Christ died for sinners; and that they shall be born again, that they may be holy and go to heaven.

Dewi. What do you say to God in Prayer?

Prydferth. "Turn thou me and I shall be turned," is one part of it, Sir.

Dewi. The Lord answer it speedily, my dear!

THEN said he to *Cyfaawn's* Daughter (whose name was *Synwryol*, and some years older than her brother) Come, my dear, What is God?

Synwryol,

Synwvrol. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Dewi. There are many spirits, and are they to be worshipped?

Synwvrol. God is an Eternal, Infinite Spirit, Sir, and there can be but one Infinite Spirit, and he alone must be worshipped. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve."

Dewi. And is our Lord Jesus Christ to be worshipped?

Synwvrol. Yes, Sir: To the church it is said, *He is thy Lord, worship thou him.* And again it is said, *Let all the Angels of God worship him.*

Dewi. Then is he that Infinite Spirit, who alone must be worshipped?

Synwvrol. Yes, Sir, according to his *divine nature.*

Dewi. What *other* nature hath he beside the *divine*?

Synwvrol. A real human nature, which he assumed, Sir. "Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same."

Dewi. And is he to be worshipped as we worship the Father?

Synwvrol. Sir, I think there can be but one kind of divine worship, and that is due only to the Eternal God. And if Christ be not the Eternal God, he could not demand it, nor accept of it. But Christ says, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

Dewi. But does not this make more Gods than one?

Synwvrol. No, Sir. There is but one Infinite God, one Divine Nature or Essence. For though

there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; yet *these three are one.*

Dewi. But why did the Infinite God, in his second Person, assume human nature.

Synwryrol. That he might suffer and die for sinners; for as God he could not do so.

Dewi. And how are we to conceive of him, as to equality or inequality with the Father.

Synwryrol. Being in the form of God, he thinks it no robbery to be equal with God; but as man and Mediator he is said to be the Father's *servant*. And he says, *My Father is greater than I.*

Dewi. And what, as Mediator, and the Father's servant, did he go through for sinners?

Synwryrol. He became obedient unto death; was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

Dewi. Why was it necessary he should go through all this?

Synwryrol. "That God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

Dewi. Where is the Mediator now?

Synwryrol. "Highly exalted at the Father's right hand, ever living to make intercession for the transgressors."

Dewi. What advantage is that to them?

Synwryrol. More than I can express. But upon his mediation and intercession the Holy Spirit cometh down to convert and sanctify poor sinners, and to lead and comfort the converted.

Dewi. You said that he was raised again for their justification; pray what is that righteousness wherein they are reckoned just before God?

Synwryrol.

Synwryol. Only the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and not any work of theirs, no not their own faith.

Dewi. What does the Holy Spirit do for poor sinners when he comes?

Synwryol. A great deal more than I can tell you, Sir: He creates in them a new heart, makes his abode there, gives faith, works repentance, leads them to seek God, to choose him as their chief good, to breathe after his fellowship, to yield obedience to his precepts, to submit unto his righteousness, to wish all prosperity to his interest, and to wait for his glory.

Dewi. And what do you find of all this work in your own soul?

Synwryol. Very little, Sir; but I am not without hope.

Dewi. What is the foundation of your hope?

Synwryol. The risen Redeemer: "Other foundation can no man lay."

Dewi. And what does this hope put you upon?

Synwryol. I would fain "purify myself as he is pure:" But alas! behold I am vile, and in every thing I sin.

Dewi. Under such apprehensions, what method do you take?

Synwryol. As a poor perishing sinner I lie at the feet of Christ, who is a merciful and compassionate High Priest, who saves the chief of sinners, and whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

Dewi. I judge it certainly your duty, though young, to declare in the church what our dear Lord hath done for you, that you may be admitted to the
Lord's

Lord's table, and wait for your Redeemer's love and presence there: Do not you think so?

Synwylol. I am very weak and under many fears, yet willing you should propound me, if my parents and you think fit.

Rhinweddol. What, my dear child converted, and seemingly got beyond her poor mother! Blessed be the God of all grace! Go on, my child, go on.

Cyflawwr. Sir, I am greatly affected with what the child declared, and desire she may be propounded.

Neophytus. Well, I must own this was a christian visit, and such as became a servant of Christ to make: And this was a christian family, I see, where such visits are very welcome.

Epenetus. I was going to tell you that the servants were then called in, who were christians and church members. Whereupon *Dewi*, having asked them some close and pertinent questions, solemnly prayed with them, and went very particularly over every case that concerned them before the Lord. When prayer was over, he took his leave of them, with the tenderest affection, wishing the presence of their dear Redeemer might abide with them; and they in the most thankful manner wished him, and all the *Israel* of God, the same supporting and refreshing presence.

Christophilus. Oh! it must be a pleasure to him to look back upon a day thus spent: But barren visits often prove *burdensome* and grieving.

Epenetus. But though this visit was over, the day was not spent: He had other visits to make; and into the house of a brother he entered whose name was *Gobeithiol*; and, after christian salutations, asked him,

him, How he did in his soul, for he seemed by his countenance to be under some trouble of mind?

Gobeithiol. Sir, so I am, and have been for some time, but it is not a trouble you are quite a stranger to. Through grace Christ is precious to me; he is all my salvation, and I am helped to lean upon him as my beloved: And he is pleased not only always to support and sustain me, but at times to make me glad through his work, and to give me times of refreshment from his presence. In his providence also he deals bountifully with me, and establishes the work of my hands. My wife, and myself are through mercy blessed with a great measure of health; but there is a trial upon us; Oh, it is a trial!—My Son grows more and more perverse, seems to have no sense of God or a future state upon him; despises the Teacher *Edgar* and all his instructions, often turns his back upon family worship, nor can I always get him to the public assemblies. His mother is now under many tears and concern of mind, talking to him in another room; for he is but just come in from one of his foolish and sinful rambles: But all our tears and intreaties, our reproofs and corrections are set at nought by him. I know not how, dear Sir, to bear up under the trial.

Dewi. My dear brother, I heartily pity you, and earnestly desire you may be graciously supported under your trial, and mercifully surprised with a speedy and saving turn upon your son's heart. If you please, we will go into the room where they are.

UPON their entrance, says *Dewi*, What, Sister *Mwynedd*? (for that was her name) in travail! in travail!

travail! For tears she could make no reply:— But the young man, whose name was *Cyndyn*, arose to go away: Stop, Young man, says *Derwi*; you shall not go hence, I have something to say to you, and if I can you shall hear it.

YOUNG man, by you the affectionate prayers of a loving father, and the repeated cries and tears of a tender mother, are despised; the glorious gospel is set at nought, and the blood of the everlasting covenant disregarded by you; the best instructions, and the most seasonable reproofs, and the most earnest intreaties of the best friends have been neglected; and by you the ungodly have been chosen as your bosom companions, and their counsel and example followed. The language of revelation, the voice of reason, the secret whispers of your own conscience are against you; all the world is against you, and every good thing in the world: And those you esteem your bosom friends, though they encourage your wickedness, in their hearts judge you a fool.— God's law condemns you, all the world condemns you, and you are self-condemned.— While you are pursuing your pleasures, you are a stranger to the best of comforts. Now, Young man, let me call you to repentance: God commands all men every where to repent; he calls you to repentance. Consider your ways, and think what will you do in the end thereof? Think over the blessed Name, in the which you have been baptized, and there you may see abundant grace for the chief of sinners. Let me have an answer to what I have said.

Cyndyn. Sir, I am not inclined to spend any thoughts upon what you say, nor can I bear your discourse: I am your humble servant.— So in a
violent

violent manner he went away; and left father, mother and *Dewi* all in tears.

Dewi. My dear brother and sister, though this is a heavy case, it is what many of the godly in all ages have more or less experienced.—Keep close with God in all practical religion; let not your son observe you remiss in any one duty towards God or man; and study to be found in all your duty towards him, and leave the event to God. I understand the Elders have taken pains with him already, and I hope they will do so still; and if he will not hear, the church must take publick notice of it.—Please to call your family, and let us worship God together.

THE family being come in, he asked every one of them some pertinent questions upon the great concern of the kingdom of Christ; and then prayed with them all, and was very particular in prayer for the stubborn rebellious young man, with many tears; and for the poor grieved parents, that they might, by the Spirit of God, be greatly taught and supported under so trying a dispensation.

PRAYER being over, he spoke comfortably to them, wished them the fellowship of the Lord and departed.

Theophilus. Unto godly affectionate parents, such trials as those are heavy beyond expression.

Epenetus. His next visit that day was to a poor brother and sister, both in years, who rejoiced greatly to see him. He asked them how they did in their souls in their old age? They answered, that they were but babes yet; could not find that *growth* they desired, and often seemed to decrease: But, that they were led to see the emptiness and *imperfection* of their own performances

formances and the suitableness and fulness of Christ more than ever, and at times longed to be with him, that they might worship him without sin, and see his glory. — *Dewi*, with great affection told them, that *this* was increasing with the increase of God; for it was a growing up into Christ. — He asked them, how they did as to outward things? They said, they had all things, and did abound; and gratefully acknowledged the providential care of their God, and the kindness of his people. He went to prayer with them, — then spoke comfortably to them, wished them the best of blessings, and said, Pray accept of my love, and this —. And so took his leave of them in the dearest christian affection.

Christophilus. To accompany a servant of Christ through such visits as these, I should esteem a great privilege. But pray, dear *Epenetus*, let us take a turn with *Yefan* the Teacher, through one of his visits.

Epenetus. You remember I told you of one *Carriades*, who desired *Yefan* to come the first opportunity to visit her husband *Durwioi*, who was under some trouble of mind, which she could not relate. — You must observe then, that in a little time he went, and finding the good woman, asked her how her husband did, and where he was? She answered, that he was at home, but to her grief very disconsolate.

Yefan. Before we call him, let me know how it is with you in your soul?

Carriades. Through the grace of God I am enabled in a measure to look to the risen Redeemer. In him I have righteousness and strength. While you were last Lord's day mentioning the reasons wherefore Christ is precious to a believer, I was filled
with

with joy, and could say with the *Psalmist*, "In heaven I have none but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee." And when you said, that *Christ is all and in all*, I thought with Comfort of the Apostle's words, *All things are yours, and you are Christ's*. The distress of mind my husband labours under is a trial to me; but I hope the comforter which our Lord promised, will relieve him, and render your visit refreshing.

Yefan. How is it with your husband as to family duty?

Cariadus. He never omits it; but I observe he engages under great discouragements, and sometimes seems straitened; at other times cries and pleads, and pleads and cries, as if his heart would break; and when he gets up, often cries out, "Now I have added to my transgression; this prayer, I fear is an abomination," — and sets us all a mourning with him. Dear Sir, I cannot tell you. — And my eldest poor boy, on whom I never observed any concern about religion till now, observing his father's distress, seems himself greatly distressed, and often prays alone; and once I heard him, in a flood of tears, say, "O Father of mercies, have mercy on my dear father in his distress; comfort him and convert me."

Yefan. Ay, Father of mercies indeed, that by means of your husband's grief leads your child to the throne of grace! What blessed fruit may you still expect! You *sow in tears to reap in joy*. "They who go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them." (n) But how is it with your husband as to private prayer?

(n) *Psalm cxxvi*, 6,

Cariadus.

Cariadus. Oh! more than ever; and by what I can learn, often with strong cries and tears. He seems indeed to be always praying.

Yefan. What do you think was his entrance into this distress?

Cariadus. I cannot tell you; I never observed any thing in his conduct but what was very agreeable to our holy profession; and yet he complains bitterly of the greatness of his sins, that he is the greatest of sinners in the world, and hath the worst heart of all men living; and wonders he is out of hell!

Yefan. If you please, call him.—*He comes.*

Durviol. Ah, dear Sir, are you come to me? It would have been my place to come to you; but I neither perform duty, nor know it.

Yefan. Come, dear brother *Durviol*, how do you do? The Gospel is good news still.

Durviol. Sir, I cannot tell you how I am. I am under very dark apprehensions concerning myself: I wish I could give you a distinct account how it is with me. I am certain I am a very great sinner; but I am not certain how God will deal with me. His terror makes me afraid; yet his gospel somehow preserves me from dark despair, though sometimes I think I am upon the brink of it.

Yefan. Pray, dear brother, what is it that carries you to the borders of such darkness?

Durviol. Sir, when I consider the spirituality of God's law, and how carnal I am; how it requires the greatest purity, not only of life and conversation, but of all the inclinations of the soul, and thoughts of the heart, yet how base and vile I am; my wounded spirit sinks under the load:—

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My sins are gone over my head as an heavy burden, too heavy for me to bear.

Yefan. You know what errand Christ came upon: Suppose you are the greatest of sinners upon earth; yet, it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners. (o)

Duwiol. Ay, Sir, the chief indeed, if ever he save me. — But I read in his word of sins not to be pardoned: And I am ready to fear my sins look like such: They are so against knowledge and resolution, and with too much liking and approbation.

Yefan. We can never be totally delivered from what approves of sin, till we are totally delivered from the being of sin. As for knowledge, it is what every believer sins against more or less. You know our Lord says, that “all manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven to the children of man, except the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.” (p)

Duwiol. Sir, that is the sin, which I am often ready to conclude I am guilty of. Could I but satisfactorily see myself out of the reach of that, it would be a wonderful relief to me.

Yefan. Whatever that sin was, you must own (for our Lord positively declares it) that all manner of sins but that shall be pardoned, to some or other of the children of men.

Duwiol. Yes, Sir, that I must own.

Yefan. The Pharisees said of Jesus, “This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub” “the

"the prince of the devils." (q) *This was their unpardonable sin. Now, dear brother, let me ask you, did you ever thus enviously, and with indignation, disdain Jesus Christ? And let me add, "that the tender concern, lest you should have been guilty of it, seems to imply such a reverence for Christ and the gospel, and such remaining operations of the Spirit on your heart, as plainly proves you are not guilty of it."**

Duwiol. My dear and honoured Teacher, blessed be God! there is a vast load sensibly removed from my soul: And though under clouds, it is supporting to see that my sins are *pardonable*.—May I never forget the goodness of the Most High! And may I, as the chief of sinners, cast all that concerns me for time and eternity, upon the all-sufficient Saviour!

Yefan. Oh! my dear brother, what hath God wrought! It is he that proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound: And unto you he hath given beauty for ashes. I hope we shall eternally exalt his name together.—But, *Cariadus*, pray where is your young son, which you said hath of late been under some concern about his soul?

Cariadus. Sir, I will call him, he is not far off.
He comes.—

Yefan. Come *Hyddysc*, for I know your name, what are you under concern of mind about? Is it your eternal state?

Hyddysc.

(q) *Matt. xii. 24.*

* See DODDINGTON'S Lectures, Lect. cxxxiii. Schol. 5.

Hyddysc. I do not know, Sir: I never was in my life as I am now, Sir.

Yefau. How are you now?

Hyddysc. I cannot tell; only I am troubled and uneasy, Sir.

Yefau. What makes you troubled and uneasy?

Hyddysc. My father's great distress, Sir; for I could not bear to see my father so; and I thought if he was in danger I was in much more.

Yefau. And what did you do when you thought yourself to be in danger?

Hyddysc. I thought I must do as my father did; cry to God to save my father and me too.

Yefau. And how do you think to be saved?

Hyddysc. I do not know, Sir; but I think he that can save me, knows how to save me. My parents always talked of Jesus Christ the Saviour, and I desire he will save me.

Yefau. Who is Jesus Christ?

Hyddysc. I do not know, Sir; only I know he is the Saviour.

Cariadus. Sir, he hath been a poor naughty boy, and never would regard any thing till this distress came upon his father: And he never strove to understand what his master and we made him learn by rote of the principles of religion: But may his poor heart now be thoroughly bent for God!

Yefau. My dear youth, remember that you are a great sinner by nature and practice, and so utterly undone: That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, according to his *divine* nature the Eternal God, but took *our* nature into personal union with himself; and so is God and man in one person
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for ever. He died for sinners, because death was the wages of sin; but the bands of death could not detain him, therefore he arose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, and sends the Holy Spirit to convert and sanctify poor sinners. — *He* can instruct the minds of children. I hope you will not, as you have done, neglect the means of grace, but desire God to help you to make the best improvement of them.

THEN others of the family were called, to whom severally he spoke what he thought most proper and expedient: And so, after a very suitable affectionate prayer, he, in the tenderest Christian love, took his leave of them all.

Neophytus. Well! what treasures Christian Teachers should be furnished with, that they may bring forth things new and old to fathers, young men and children, as the case requires! — Now, how did the *Ruling Elders* visit?

Epenetus. The Teacher made several more visits that day, among some of the godly poor; strengthening their hands, and worshipping God with them. And also in one place or two he visited where some notions inconsistent with the gospel were springing up, of which I shall not at present give the account, because perhaps upon their obstinacy in sinful opinions we may have occasion to mention the more publick concern of the church with them hereafter. Besides, I have tired you sufficiently for this time: Evening is upon us, and our families are waiting. My dear brethren and neighbours, the presence of Zion's King be with us all!

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE VI.

Account of the Ruling Elders' visits. They had no fixed days. One of them visits Diwall; reproves him for his worldly-mindedness, &c. Another Elder visits other families; reproves a servant for eye-service, &c; which was attended with good effect. The Ruling Elders inspect the walk and conversation of the people. The Deacons distribute among the poor what was collected. Instances of private offences, and the offenders recovered by private admonitions. Instances of offenders, not reclaimed by private reproofs, brought before the church. Publick admonition and excommunication.

PHILAETHES.

NEIGHBOURS and brethren, I am glad to see you all so well and chearful, and the time so well observed. But *Neophytus* (such is his zeal) got the start of us, and I am afraid thought us dilatory.

Neophytus. I have not been here many minutes before you; but am glad you are all come. A question of mine, proposed at the close of the last opportunity, was passed by unnoticed: But I am so well acquainted with your condescending friendship, that I am not so much as tempted to think it

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was disdained; so I resolved on being here time enough, that I might repeat it before any thing else offers. — Pray, dear *Epenetus*, how did the *Ruling Elders* visit?

Epenetus. They had not their fixed days to receive visits, as the *Preaching Elders* had, but every day was to them alike. If they were not found at home one day, the persons who sought them might come another, or leave their request that they would please to visit them. Their doors were always open for any that came on the concern of Christ's kingdom. Many, under the first work of God upon their hearts, did choose to use freedom with *them* first. Complaints and grievances were generally brought to them, and very often by their prudent endeavours were so removed, that the *preaching Elders* never heard of them. *Didawyll*, being a person in years, was generally at home and at leisure to receive Christian visits: He was also wise and prudent, and very capable of giving the best advice. As for *Diawyd* and *Dyfal*, there was no end of their labour abroad, from family to family, from person to person, diligently discharging their trust and duty. *Gruffudd*, being a person of strong faith, was of great use to them all under discouraging trials: And they were all men of prayer.

Neophytus. Will you please to favour us with an instance or two of their work and way?

Epenetus. You must observe then that *Dyfal*, one day on his visits, entered the house of one *Diawall*, a person thought to be too *negligent* in several religious duties; but who received the Elder very kindly,

kindly, as did also the family. After a little time in common discourse, says the Elder

Dysal, Come, brother *Diwall*, let us redeem our time to some religious purpose: You have been planted in the house of the Lord now some time; and how do you flourish in his courts?

Diwall. I hope well; I know more than I did, and have good words come to me, and good thoughts upon them: So I hope I flourish. I love to hear both our *Bishops* always; and I was greatly pleased of late to hear our *Pastor* say, That he who did not provide for his own family, had denied the faith, and was worse than an infidel: And indeed I think so too.

Elder. It is a certain truth that, generally speaking, persons who neglect their families, and the duties of their particular callings as men, do, notwithstanding their much talk about religion, live in the neglect of the duties of their calling as Christians. Those, who are slothful in business, are never truly fervent in spirit serving the Lord. But there are *two* sorts of duties that persons owe to their families; each very necessary, and in their proper place very beautiful.

Diwall. Yes, Sir, like enough; and I hope I know, and am found in both, as I have time, and as the case requires.

Elder. I mean a wife, moderate, well-tempered care to provide the necessaries of life for them, and that in such a way and manner as may convince them, that this world is not our *portion*; and then a holy, diligent and zealous attendance on the duties of religion, in such a way as may

convince them that we seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness in the first and *principal* place, He that does not do this, does not provide for his own family.

Diwall. True, I often tell them so; that religion is the principal thing, and that they must die ere long and leave this world.

Elder. To be free, permit me to ask you, in the name of Zion's King, who makes it my duty, do you constantly and regularly worship God in and with your family? instruct your children and servants? put them upon duty? and allow them proper time?

Diwall. Sir, I attempt it as well as I can; all people cannot do alike; and I cannot always do as I would: But my wife knows my endeavours to discharge all my duties.

Elder. Sister *Iffel*, (for that was her name) how is it with you in your soul? and how prospers religion in your family?

Iffel. I am but very low from day to day; often discouraged, but through mercy not left: For at times I am refreshed in *publick ordinances*, though my comfort, by some means or other, is like the morning cloud, and my religious resolutions are too much like the early dew. As to religion in our family, my soul desires to see more of it. I am afraid our house is not so with God as it ought to be.

Diwall. Why, wife, you know I pray in the family, and often read; and speak of good things too, as well as I can.

Iffel.

Iffel. We do not always pray; and when we do, it is seldom in a seasonable hour, and I am afraid never with such a savoury spirit, and evangelical fear, as become all the duty; as I have before now told you weeping.

Elder. Ah, brother *Diwall*, I am sorry to hear this account: The God of the families of *Israel* have mercy on you, and on your poor family also! What, not pray always! And when you do, yet seldom in a seasonable hour!

Diwall. Why, Sir, business, it may be, calls me out in a morning, and perhaps I am not within till afternoon; and then, sometimes business keeps me out late; and you know *that* must be minded.

Elder. Ah, brother! If your heart were thoroughly bent for prayer, you would follow the Apostle's rule; *Watching thereunto with all perseverance*; when called out betimes, you would get your family together betimes; and when out, would make all possible haste to be at home in seasonable time. But how do you do at meals? God should be reverently acknowledged before we eat, and when we are refreshed. Is that part of duty regularly kept up?

Diwall. Yes, Sir, when I am with them; but I am not always present, and often, when at home, we do not eat together.

Elder. Pray, Sister *Iffel*, how is it with you as to that duty when your husband is not with you?

Iffel. Truly, Sir, very indifferent; I am but a poor woman, and generally disheartened: And I often tell my son *Anianol*, that he should own God in our food and refreshment; but he never does.

Elder. Hark you, *Anianol*; do not you think it

is your duty to crave a blessing on your food, and return thanks when you are refreshed? You are not a child; you have often heard your duty in publick sermons; and I know your master *Edgar*, when you were with him, gave you the best instructions. I hope you are convinced it is the Lord that gives you your daily bread, and can make your table a blessing.

Anianol. I do not know, Sir.

Elder. No! Did you not hear our *Pastor*, last Lord's day observe, That every thing is sanctified to us by the word of God and prayer? and that we should therefore pray to God for a blessing on our food, lest our table become a snare to us?

Anianol. I was not there.

Elder. Seeing I can ask you, with your parents' leave, (and even exclusive of that I should think it my duty) Pray where were you?

Anianol. Taking a harmless walk with a few acquaintance in the field, Sir.

Elder. And can you say that it is a harmless thing to neglect the worship of God, and profane the Lord's day?

Anianol. Sir, there are great numbers that take that liberty, and we were a considerable company, but I know of no harm that we did.

Elder. Can you think that sin is no harm?

Anianol. Sir, people cannot *kill* or *steal* and be harmless; but we did neither, so I think we sinned not.

Elder. Pray, young man, tell me what is sin?

Anianol. To do such wickedness; but I never did it, and hope I never shall.

Elder

Elder. Then you will never want a Saviour, to save you from sin?

Anianol. I am no greater sinner than others, that I know of; and I shall fare as they do.

Elder. Our *Preaching Elders* have had talk with you; do you remember any thing they said?

Anianol. They said I was a sinner, and undone without a Saviour, but I cannot see much into it.

Elder. How can you tell then, but the *blindness* of your mind may be your sin and misery also?

Anianol. I do not know for that.

Elder. Then, poor youth, let me tell you it is so. Sin hath brought that blindness upon you, and by sin you run more and more into darkness. It is a very awful account the scripture gives us of persons in your case: *Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.* (1) I also tell you, *Anianol*, that as you are a sinner by nature and practice, so there is salvation in none but Christ. And, observe, all he *saves*, he *converts* and sanctifies. And the ordinary method he makes use of for these important ends, is the *ministry* of his word. Therefore, as an Elder in the church of Christ, I reprove you for profaning the Lord's day, and for neglecting a most *reasonable duty*, while you partake of the bounties of heaven. Consider your ways, *Anianol*, and repent. Remember profane *Esau*, who despised his birthright, and take warning.—If you persist in such methods the church

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must

must take notice of your case. May the compassionate Redeemer give you speedy repentance!

THEN speaking to the maid-servant, he said, come *Prudd*, (for that was her name) how is it with you in your soul? I hope the yoke of Christ is easy to you?

Prudd. I would be very thankful for a name in his house, which I hope is an everlasting one that shall not be cut off. It is not always alike with me, as to sensible enjoyments, but it is my desire to walk with God. I thank you sir, for your kindness, and beg your prayers.

Elder. I must take the liberty to speak a word to your apprentice. Come, *Moefol*, you are the child of godly parents, how is it with *you* as to the great concerns of religion?

Moefol. I cannot tell you, Sir: Many thoughts pass through my heart, but they do not take much hold of me, nor I of them.

Elder. But are you under no trouble of mind that you are so confused, and at those uncertainties; seeing God says, *My Son give me thy heart?* (s)

Moefol. Sometimes I am distressed; but that trouble passes away like all the rest. My parents used to tell me, that I should seek first the *kingdom of God*; but things appear to me now as if I were to make *this world* my principal concern, if I observe my master, and do as he bids me.

Elder. But I hope your master bids you to read and pray, at proper times; and that he instructs you in the principles of the Christian religion.

Moefol,

Moesol. Sir, my master is present, and can tell you what he does. As for proper times, it is difficult to find them; for I am up very early and late: And I think myself hard tasked; and when inclined to read a little before going to bed, I am allowed no candle: Every Lord's day indeed I call at my father's, and there am made to read a chapter or two.

Diwall. Sir, in keeping him close to work, I do but my duty; and he is like to be the better for it. I never knew work hurt any body; idleness tends to nothing but ruin: As for candle, I think to allow him one late at night is needless, wasteful, and dangerous: I bid him be a good boy, and serve God, which he may do without a candle.

Elder. Ah! my friend, things are not with you as they seemed to promise once: Your very expressions betray you.—You do not keep up the worship of God in your family, as you ought; your wife, I know, is much grieved; your son, awfully hardened, is a stranger to the principles of the oracles of God; and your poor servant is *slavishly* used, while you make him serve with *rigour*. Poor fellow, he is willing to serve you, nor is he averse to the service of God; but you seem to deal with him as if God must have no part of his time.—Be it known to you, that *your* master also is in heaven, nor is there respect of persons with him. And though your servant does not want food, yet seeing you allow him no time for God's worship, nor teach him therein, you do not give him properly speaking, what is *just and equal*. (t) I charge

L 5

him

(t) Col. iv, 1,

him here before you, to serve you in singleness of heart, fearing God; and I charge you here before him, and the rest of your family to continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. Instruct your family, and study their welfare. — I hope you will take this well at my hands, as it is a duty I owe to the Lord and to you. I wish it was performed better. I trust the Lord will enable me to remember you all before the throne of grace; and may you be helped to pray for me, who am so insufficient for my work, and often so discouraged in it!

Diwall. I hope, Sir, you will go to prayer with us, now you are here; and I take your visit and freedom as a kindness: I wish we may receive advantage thereby.

UPON this the *Elder* thanked him for accepting his service; and prayed a most affectionate prayer, mentioning every particular case with great enlargement and many tears. And when he had done, he gave the best advice to each in particular, and especially cautioned *Diwall* against excessive love to the things of this world: Then, with tender concern, took his leave of them all.

Neophytus. What an encouragement must it be to *Pastors* and *Teachers*, to have such *Elders* to assist them! — To reflect that, while they are giving attendance to reading, exhortation and doctrine, — studying to divide the word of truth aright, — another part of Christ's kingdom suffers not, but is attended to by *Helpers* of Christ's appointment!

Phileathos. And I am thinking what a comfort it must be to a poor church to see itself under the
care

care of so many faithful overseers. It is a promised privilege; "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day nor night." (u) Again; "There shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God." (w)

Epenetus. The Elder, *Dysal*, visited some more families before he returned home: And so he turned into a brother's house, whose name was *Xsrydol*, whom he found well and chearful. After some profitable talk on *scripture* and *experience*, but before they went to prayer, says *Xsrydol*, Sir, if you please, patiently hear a small concern between us and our servant here present. We do not question her piety, in the main; she hath been a member with us, you know, for some time. She speaks of Christ with affection, and attends family worship with zeal, and I believe is of use to the children. In every path of duty I would give her due encouragement: But there are some things which somewhat grieve me, nor can I prevail upon her to reform them; if I could, *you* should not have heard of them.—She does not do our service in our absence, as if we were present, and makes some of her acquaintance too welcome with the best things in our house that she can come at, without our leave.—

Dysal, the Elder, said to her, *Hawddgar*, (for that was her name) I am sorry there should be any uneasiness in any Christian family, and it will be

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to

(u) *Isa.* lxii, 6.

(w) *Jer.* xxx, 6.

to the honour of those, who have any hand therein, immediately to reform. Here are two things laid to your charge;— Pray how do you improve your time when your master and mistress are absent?

Hawddgar. Not vainly, Sir; I should be under a great deal of guilt if I did so: But you know I am bound to redeem all the time I can for reading and prayer, and I cannot so well do it when they are in the way.

Elder. What, is your place so very hard? Do they allow you no time for religious duties?

Hawddgar. I cannot say that my place is hard: And must own, that I have some opportunities for religious exercises; but still want more time than I have; and can think none so proper as when I am most alone.

Elder. And what if God should say to you, *Who hath required this at your hands?* You grant that you have opportunities for private worship, a privilege some would be glad of; yet you say, You would have *more* time. But you have *sold* your time to your master and mistress, and they pay you for it, and can you imagine that God calls you to do them injustice? Is it possible that your conscience should not tell you, at those seasons you say you improve for religious ends, “ Now thou art doing
“ wrong; thou art doing as thou wouldest not be
“ done by; thou art defrauding thy master and
“ mistress of their time, and they must pay thee
“ for their own?” You doubtless remember the rule; *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not with*

EYE.

EYE-SERVICE as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good-will doing service as to the Lord and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. (x) You see it is not the Lord's will you should do as you have done: You may expect more of his presence in a diligent improvement of your time in your proper service.—But you also take unjust freedom with things that are not your own; pray, what do you say to that?

Hawddgar. Why, Sir, I live with a brother in christianity; and thought I could be more free there, than if I lived with *Heathen* men who would take an advantage of it: And when I gave any thing, it was but to entertain some dear religious persons, to whom my master and mistress, as well as myself, owe love and respect.

Elder. Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but RATHER do them service. (y) — Nor should you give any thing away without leave or order. Exhort Servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again, not PURLOINING, but shewing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. (z) Purloining is taking (or giving away) the property of another

(x) *Eph.* vi, 5—8, (y) *1 Tim.* vi, 1, 2, (z) *Tir.* ii, 9, 10

another without leave. So that you may plainly see, your practice is condemned by the word of God. And as for those who come, when they think you are alone, to be entertained, under pretence of Christian conversation; they are no better than *Plunderers*, and give too evident indications that *their God is their belly*. Wherefore I do, in the name of Christ, reprove you for your misconduct. And when you see those *dear religious persons* again, pray reprove them sharply for their sin.

Harwddgar. Sir, I did not think it had been thus; but am sorry at my heart that I have acted so. I have wronged my master and mistress, and know not how to make them amends. May God keep me from all appearance of such evils any more!

Ispryuel. That is amends enough to us, *Harwddgar*, we desire no other: And we assure you, that what time we can spare any day for the edification of your soul, it shall upon your request be granted you; and if a christian friend come to see you, and needs refreshment, only ask for it, and he shall be cordially welcome.

Harwddgar. Sir, I am ashamed of myself, and return thanks for your christian tenderness.

THEN the *Elder* prayed with and for them all, and in tender christian love took his leave. After visiting a poor christian family or two more, strengthening their hands in God, he returned to his own house.

Neophytus. But pray, dear *Epenetus*, will you please to give us an instance in each of the *Ruling Elders* discharging the duty of christian visits? And will

it be agreeable to give us some short account of the *Deacons*, in their work towards the poor.

Epenetus. Whatever belonged to the walk and conversation of the people, fell directly under the care and inspection of the *Ruling Elders*.^{*} But, as it would be endless, so I think it is needless to instance in the visits of *other Elders*. — But as for the *Deacons*, if my neighbours desire it, I shall be willing to give a short account of them.

Theophilus. By all means, *Epenetus*.

Epenetus. The charitable collections of the church and assembly being made, and the distributions thereof to the several poor fixed, by the common consent of *Elders* and *Deacons*, as they thought most requisite; — the *Deacons* always took away with them what was allowed for their respective divisions, and so distributed to individuals their several portions, with cheerfulness and speed. — And (to give you a specimen) one day *Tirion*, one of the *Deacons*, went to visit some of the poor, and took with him their respective portions; and so, entering the mean habitation of one *Gwaftad*, a very poor man, yet very constant under his Redeemer's yoke, says the *Deacon* to him, Brother, how do you do? and how does your aged yoke-fellow do?

Gwaftad. Ah, brother *Tirion*, are you come to visit us? We are, through mercy, as well as can be expected, under our prevailing infirmities: Our houses of clay decay apace.

Deacon. How is it with you in the *immortal* part, that cannot decay? For the house of clay, though
fearfully

^{*} See Dial, iii, page 103, &c.

fearfully and wonderfully made, is but a *temporary* tabernacle.

Gwaſtad. Truly it is to us as if *both* decayed, for our memory and capacity fail us much.

Deacon. When the most skilful hand attempts to work with broken or worn out tools, his work will not appear much to his praise. But what an amazing mercy, that our tender Redeemer will not suffer our faith to fail, though its *acts* may be interrupted!

Gwaſtad. Ay, a mercy indeed; Christ is the author and finisher of faith. Sometimes I have thought my faith grew weaker, because *sensible* enjoyments seemed to withdraw; yet I am taught to know that faith's great concern is with Christ, who is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. This is very precious to us both, and, while under sensible decays, we converse on it with pleasure.

Deacon. Then I hope you are comfortable in your souls?

Gwaſtad. Through grace, we are sedately cheerful; and my poor wife is favoured with *more* foretastes of heaven than I am. The other day, all on a sudden, she cried out, *I see him! I see him!* Said I, Who do you see? She replied, *The King, the King in his beauty! He is crowned with glory and honour! Oh, I long to be with him!* — Come, my wife, can you tell our dear friend here, how it was with you then?

Siriol (for that was her name) answered, No truly, husband, I cannot. Indeed it is not gone from me, like that great king's dream (what was his name?) for through mercy I *remember* it, and something of the favour of it remains in my soul: But I cannot
put

put into *words* what I then felt. And though I am not, as then, on the mount, yet I can say, through grace, that Jesus Christ is very precious to me. He is my wisdom, my righteousness, my strength, my worthiness, my portion: He is my heaven and my all. Oh! the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage. I have and abound; blessed be the Lord, blessed be the Lord for ever!

Deacon. The church and Elders give their love to you, and this ———.

Gwaſſad. What constant reason have we to admire the care of our Redeemer, that he should put it into the hearts of his dear servants to send to us before we want! How great is his goodness which he lays up for us! We admire his care and love in your tenderness and kindness, that poor unworthy We should be thus regarded!

Deacon. I bless God, that he deals so bountifully with you; for indeed it refreshes my spirit. I carry more away with me than I brought. May your joy more and more abound! The presence of the Lord be with you!

Gwaſſad. Nay, dear brother, if your time will permit, I beg you would go to prayer with us before you depart. — *Which he did.*

Christophilus. Well, I see it is possible a person may be very poor, and yet very happy! What a *palace* was this! Here the King of glory made his abode! What rich furniture! What bright robes! What delicious refreshments were here! — It is impossible to take an *inventory* of what such do enjoy.

— But

—But pray, *Epenetus*, proceed; I hope you have not done with the *Deacon* yet.

Epenetus. No; he called upon another poor family. And, entering the house, he asked them how they did? The man of the house, whose name was

Galarus, answered, I thank you, we are but sorrowful: Yet I must own it is a mercy it is no worse with us. I am under bodily pains that much affect my mind; my wife is always feeble and much indisposed; and our *child* here, though grown up, is not able to get his bread by reason of weakness; we are poor and afflicted.

Deacon. Well, dear brother, that is what the Lord promises in one place; *I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.* (a) To be rich in faith is to be rich indeed! — I am just come from brother *Gwaftad* and his wife, and they are as poor as you can be, yet are as chearful as birds of day.—Come, you have the same reason, through grace, to triumph. Your portion is great, and the afflictions of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.

Galarus. That is some support indeed, that our afflictions are not always to last: But I think God gives us leave to groan under them, while they are upon us.

Deacon. True, he would have us be sensible of his hand, and of our trials; but it is a very easy thing to exceed in groans and complaints. There are two extremes to be avoided, the one is to de-
spise

(a) *Zeph.* iii. 12.

spise the chastenings of the Lord, and the other is to *faint*, when rebuked of him. I hope the Lord will bear you up in the *midst of the path of judgment*.

Galarus. When we think of years past, and present circumstances, our hearts sink; and we wonder wherefore we are continued in this world?

Deacon. Ah, dear brother, you greatly mistake things; the time past of your life was not the most honourable part of it. *Then* indeed you appeared more active and vigorous, and *now* you are called to magnify the name of your glorious Lord in the exercise of patience; that you may be *perfect, and entire, lacking nothing*. Christ is your Lord, and we are your servants.

Galarus. Dost thou hear, wife? Our kind brother here says, we are raised to I know not what dignity, and have I know not how many servants: Dost thou think so, wife?

Trist (for that was her name) answered, Really I do not know; there are many *mysteries* belonging to the christian religion, and perhaps this is one of them. I often thought, that if we suffered the will of the Lord aright, we should not be destitute of comfort. A person in suffering God's will, honours him; and I remember he says, *Them that honour me, I will honour*. For my part, I wish I could get over my sorrow: I hope I am very willing to be poor, and would admire the care of God, and the kindness of his people towards us in our poverty; but the weakness of my *poor child* grieves me more than any thing.

Deacon. Christ said to one of his disciples, *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*

after. There are many things in providence, that the most penetrating minds upon earth cannot explore: But there is one truth very plain, if you and I can but believe it; and whether we receive it or no, it is an everlasting truth, viz. *That whatever God doth, is right and best.* It is best you should be as you are; and it is best your son should be as he is: *Every thing worketh for good.* It would have been a greater grief to you to see him *abusing* a state of health and strength. Hereby, I am fully persuaded, the Lord doth his soul good. Do not you hope so yourself, young man?

Cysduddiol (for so he was called) answered, Truly, Sir, I am not without hope about it. The Eternal God is, doubtless, infinitely wise and good: I wish I knew more of him, and of his salvation! I know I am a poor sinner, and that there is no way to heavenly glory but Christ. These things I think over a little, and am willing to leave all with the Lord.

Deacon. Well said, my dear young man: Christ and any condition; I say it again, Christ and any condition! — Come, brother *Galarus*, you see the dear Redeemer regards you all; how can you be unhappy? He hath given you himself, and how can you be poor? God hath given you the eye of faith, that can view the glories within the veil: Make constant use of it. The church and Elders ordered their love to be remembered, and this ———. Come, I have a little time before me, let us worship God together.

Trist.

Trist. Oh! I thank you, dear Sir: I remember last time you were here, you could not go to prayer, your stay was so short.

UPON this he went to prayer,—afterwards took his leave,—visited one place more,—and so returned to his habitation.

Theophilus. I return you many thanks, dear *Epenetus*, for complying so readily with my request, and giving us so distinct a relation of *Social Religion* in christian visits.

Neophytus. If *Epenetus* please, and with the good leave of the company, I would further request a brief account of *private offences*, that probably occurred among these professing brethren.

Epenetus. I shall then gratify my young friend, which I am persuaded will not be ungrateful to the company.—Upon a time, in some discourse which *Egwan* (of whom you have heard something before) and one *Hyderus* had, wherein they differed in opinion; the latter told the former, that he was an *insignificant fellow*, whose thoughts were not to be regarded. *Egwan* said in answer, that he took it very ill of him. The other replied, You may take it as you please: So their conversation ended in a cloud. *Egwan* had but little rest that night. Is it so then, says he to himself; and yet did Christ redeem me? Did the Spirit of the Lord visit my heart? Did the church of Christ receive me? And must I (though weak and feeble) be called *insignificant*? Tossed through the night with much uneasiness, he thought to go in the morning to one of the Elders to complain. He got up, and (as usual) in the first place committed himself to God: But while he was
at

at prayer, mourning over his present uneasiness; that word came into his mind, *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.* He quickly saw, that it was not his *immediate* business to *divulge* it to any body, no not to an Elder; but to go directly to the brother who gave him the offence. Accordingly, he desired God to give him meekness of wisdom from above, and to bless his design: So he went to Hyderus, and spoke to him as follows:

Egwan. Brother, I have had a very uneasy night; you spoke, I think, very unadvisedly with your lips, to say no worse of it: You have grieved me much, and surely you have sinned against God. I have judged it my duty to come and have some talk with you about it; and have mentioned it to none but the Lord. You know you called me, in disdain, *An insignificant fellow.* Pray, what do you think of the *expression*, and of the *spirit* in which it was spoken?

Hyderus. Truly I think it was not worth your while to come to me about it. I charge you not with pride; yet pray does it not look very much that way, that you should make it your business to come hither to prove yourself valuable, and significant?

Egwan. I came with no other design, than to tell you my grievance. For if I am such a person as with disdain you described me, then am I not regarded by the Redeemer; have no portion in him, nor doth his Spirit dwell in me; nor hath he ever taken notice of me, otherwise, sure, I should be entitled to a place in the esteem of his children. Why did the church receive me? You have censured

fured the whole church and its Elders, as well as myself.

Hyderus. I do not pretend to justify what I said; but think you greatly aggravate it; whereas you might as well have been easy without taking any notice of it.

Egwan. And suffer the sin to lie upon you? Brother, nothing is desired but repentance for sinning against God. I hope I am willing to think *meanly* of myself, but am not so willing that any thing appertaining to the Redeemer's kingdom should be treated with derision or disdain.

Hyderus. Dear brother, I disdain you not; you discover yourself to be a christian of good improvement. I am sorry to have so sinned against God and you, and desire that brotherly love and tender respect may continue.

Egwan. Amen; I am satisfied, dear brother.

Christophilus. What a speedy, happy end was put to this offence! Oh, what endless strife of tongues, evil surmisings, animosities and popular clamour spring and prevail in some places, for want of observing such a method as this!

Neophytus. But what if *Egwan* had gone to the Elder *first*, as he thought once to do?

Epenetus. Why then he would have been reproved for taking such a wrong step; would have been better informed, and sent about his business.

Neophytus. But what if *Hyderus* had justified himself, and persisted in his sin?

Epenetus. Then *Egwan* must have taken another opportunity, and desired a brother or two to go along

along with him; that they might use their joint endeavours to bring the offender to repentance.

Neophytus. And will you please to favour us with an instance of that nature?

Epenetus. A servant of *Cyfiawn* (of whom you have had some account before) went to one *Byrbwyll* for something he wanted, and desired him to be favourable, and use him kindly, because he was a poor apprentice. *Byrbwyll* replied (rashly enough indeed) Apprentices may live as well as their masters if they please. The young man made no reply; but when he came home, and shewing what he had bought, he thoughtlessly repeated this part of the story. *Cyfiawn*, hearing this, said to his servant, What did he mean by saying that apprentices, if they pleased, might live as well as their masters? The young man answered, Indeed, Sir, I do not know; for he did not explain himself. The words do not need much explaining, said the master: I hope you are easy in your place, and resolve to be honest in it. Yes, Sir, replied the servant, and hope I shall have reason to bless the Lord that ever I came here.

UPON this, *Cyfiawn*, having sought the Lord about it, goes directly to *Byrbwyll*, and says to him, — Brother, I am in a measure grieved and offended, and have thought it my duty to come and tell you so: You told my servant, That Apprentices may live if they please, as well as their masters.

Byrbwyll. And you may think it your duty to return again as wise as you came: I gave you no just cause of grief or offence, that I know of.

Cyfiawn.

Cyfiawn. Your words now are very rash and provoking; but I would wish to exercise that patience which becomes the gospel. I am persuaded you have sinned against God, as well as the young man and myself; and if so, you may well bear with a brother who comes only to call you to repentance.

Byrbawyll. May I never be guilty of a greater sin, and I am safe. Pray how does what you call my *sin*, appear to be such?

Cyfiawn. I charge your expression with a very sinful tendency to make my servant unfaithful and unjust. As a *servant* he wants for nothing, but a *master* he is not.

Byrbawyll. Then if he wants for nothing, I hope he may be said to live as well as his master; and pray then where is the sin of calling him to be pleased with his condition?

Cyfiawn. Any impartial person who considers your expression, and the occasion of it, will quickly see it could intend nothing but what was unjust; and this fig-leaf you would draw over it does but make the case worse. My servant said, that he would have you be favourable to him, and use him kindly, because he was a *poor* apprentice. Pray, what was your answer to this? That he might live as well as I did if he pleased; which, in all equitable construction, must intend a making too free with things that were not his own.

Byrbawyll. I did not say, *your apprentice* might live if he pleased as well as you do; but that *apprentices* might live as well as their masters if they pleased.

M

Cyfiawn.

Cyfiawn. And pray, seeing you spoke this to my apprentice, did you not as good as tell him it was he himself you meant? And I say it was no less in effect, than putting him upon robbing his master; and you may very well know that the injustice done me, if the young man should at any time comply with your insinuation, would be the least part of misery belonging to such a deed.

Byrbwyll. But perhaps if you did not think it the *greatest* part, you would not have come to me on such an errand.

Cyfiawn. No, my loss would not have been my sin; but what must such a fact be to the servant, in its nature and consequences; and what must the man be thought of who by base insinuations put him upon this?

Byrbwyll. Indeed I must tell you that I think your words are very provoking, and were it not for regard to religion, I should discover my resentment in another manner than I do. What, cannot a man be free with his customers, in an innocent jest, but he must be called to account for it, and treated after this manner? Suppose I sinned, yet I think you the greater sinner, to use me thus. I have had enough of your talk!

Cyfiawn. And though I have had nothing of what I came for, I have had too much of what adds to my grief; may repentance not to be repented of be graciously given you.

AND so they parted, both under uneasiness of mind, you must think. — *Byrbwyll* was vexed with himself, that he should be such a fool as rashly to speak what made him look like a rogue; and how
to

to get off with reputation as a man (not to say a christian) he could not tell. He knew it appeared in that light wherein *Cyfiawyn* took it; but to own so much, and confess sorrow, was too mortifying a task. — *Cyfiawyn* went home grieved at his non-success in so good a design; could not rest about it, and prayed it over many a time: At length he took two brethren with him, whose names were *Doeth* and *Ysbyriol*; and to *Byrbawyll* they went, whom *Cyfiawyn* thus addressed:

BROTHER, I cannot be free to let things lie as they do between us: I still apprehend myself to be a grieved person, and have brought these brethren with me according to our Lord's rule; nor do I desire any thing but your repentance.

Byrbawyll. If you, or these brethren, can make it plain that I sinned; I hope I shall be willing to repent. But I think your dealing with me the last time was somewhat harsh, for I had no design to put apprentices upon plundering their masters.

Cyfiawyn. To search the heart is the prerogative of another; but my design was, and is, only with your expression. The whole of the account I related to these brethren, and now commit it chiefly to their management.

Doeth. The case, as I received it, is thus; That upon brother *Cyfiawyn*'s servant begging you to be favourable, and to use him kindly, because he was a poor apprentice; you replied, "That apprentices might live as well as their masters if they pleased." And was it thus?

Byrbawyll. Yes, I believe it was much to that effect.

Doeth. Whenever a *poor* servant came to weigh and consider the import of such an expression, what do you think he could make of it? How could he fairly furnish himself with things as good and costly as his master if he pleased? He must have the command of goods or money, or both, or he could not thus please himself with such agreeable things as his vain mind might prompt him to procure; which, according to your expression, must be as good as his master's. Neither goods nor money of his own can he produce: Pray then which way must he turn his hand?

Byrbawyll. Nay, I do not know; let him turn it as he will. I am very sorry that you give yourselves and me such trouble.

Ystyriol. Consider, brother, we do not come here to expose you; we desire nothing, but your repentance, and I hope you shall never hear more of this story. And seeing you have unadvisedly dropped a word, which perhaps hath more evil in it than you designed; let us intreat you to be sorry for it.

Byrbawyll. I own it was rash, but perhaps it was more in *jest* than any thing else; I am sorry it is so much insisted upon.

Ystyriol. You know that *foolish jesting* is *inconvenient* and *sinful*; (b) and were it no more than that, the word of God calls you to repentance. Moreover, it is plain, if you put the case to yourself, that you would have taken it ill, if any man, especially a christian, had expressed himself after that manner to *your* servant.

Doeth.

(b) *Eph. v. 4.*

Doeth. Ah, brother! our speech should be always so seasoned as to administer grace to the hearers. We can never be too *cautious* in what we say to other people's servants. It is a very easy matter to make poor servants dissatisfied with their state; whereby they are tempted to help themselves from what is not their own. But, Oh, what injury is hereby done them for both worlds!—What has that tendency in your expression, is what, in our dear Lord's name, we call you to repentance for.

Byrbawyll. Well, I shall not justify myself in it; it was spoken foolishly, and I believe sinfully; I am sorry I have so sinned against God, the young man, and his master. If the young man be sent for I shall tell him so; or you, brethren, may do it for me; and assure him I shall do it for myself the first convenient opportunity. Pray for me; and dear brother *Cyfiawon*, forgive me; I hope I shall never be suffered to transgress so any more.

Cyfiawon. I bless God for this repentance, and am entirely satisfied. If you please, let us join in prayer. —

Neophytus. How remarkably the beauty of the Lord our God shines on all his blessed institutions! I suppose they acted much in the same manner in every other personal offence.

Epenetus. Yes, yes, the same rule they always observed; or if any failed they always met with proper reproof for it.

Theophilus. But we may justly suppose that all offences were not so happily terminated in those days.

Epenetus. No, there were some brought into the church; one of which happened as follows:—A

brother, whose name was *Gwirion*, cheapened a garment in the shop of one *Cyfrwys*; and as they could not agree about the price, *Gwirion* went his way. When he was gone, that garment was removed, and another not so good put in its place (whether by accident or design, must be left undecided;) however, the man comes back, takes a turn again in the shop, and lays his hand upon the garment which was placed in the room of that he first cheapened, and says, Stay, this is the garment. Ay, ay, says *Cyfrwys*, that is the garment. Well, said he, will you take the money for it? Yes, replied the other; but more than you offered I hope. Then, said *Gwirion*, I will give but so much more or leave it. Said *Cyfrwys*, I will not turn you away, because you are a friend; take it. Accordingly he paid for it and took it with him. But when he came home, and more narrowly examined what he had bought, he saw plainly that he was deceived. He carried it back under concern, and told *Cyfrwys*, that *that* was not the garment which he meant. But, replied he, it is what I sold. Nay, says *Gwirion*, you told me what was not true; you said that *this* was the garment. I did so, says the other, and I say so still; and *this* is the garment, and *that* is the garment, and so is that *yonder*. But surely, said *Gwirion*, this is not agreeable to the simplicity and sincerity of the christian religion; for there is a sort of a lie in what you say. Pray give me the right garment, or my money. Says *Cyfrwys*, I am no liar, you have the garment you bought; and so pray trouble me no longer. The next day he took with him two brethren more, who endeavoured to fasten upon

upon him a conviction of unfair dealing and untruth; but he was proof against all, and would not hear them.

UPON this they all returned to *Gwirion's* house, and there prayed and mourned before the Lord; not for the loss the offended person sustained (that was but a trifle,) but because a *christian* should *deceive* him, and then *justify* himself in that iniquity. Now *Gwirion* thought, that according to the laws of Christ, it was his duty to *tell the church*; (c) in which the brethren concurred. Accordingly, he went to *Didwyll*, one of the Ruling Elders, and told him the whole affair; and how the case then stood.

Neophytus. But you said, that he thought it his duty to tell the *church*; and he tells only *one* of the *Ruling Elders*.

Epenetus. And for a good reason; because all things were brought to the church *by* the Elders. Hereby things were done *decently and in order*; and the church was secured from attending to any thing crude and undigested, frivolous or unseasonable.—But I told you, that in this case one of the Elders was informed of the particulars, and he consulted his brethren, who approved of the aggrieved person's conduct, and thought the offence was such as called now for *publick* notice: And they ordered a brother to acquaint *Cyfrwys*, that if life and health were continued, he must not fail being at the first church meeting (which meetings indeed *then* the members seldom missed.) — When the expected day arrived,

M 4

and

and some time was spent in the service of it, *Di-awyll* spoke as follows:

“BRETHREN, our Lord is holy, and there is no
“unrighteousness with him; he loveth justice and
“hateth iniquity; and all those who love him should
“hate evil: But while in this life, imperfections
“are likely to attend us. Some who were mem-
“bers of the church of *Corinth* are reproved by
“*Paul*, for doing wrong to, and defrauding their
“brethren! To our grief, we have something
“among us of the same nature.”—*Here he goes particularly over the whole story.*

Yefan. Brother *Cyfrawys*, have you any exception to this representation of the case? You are at liberty to speak for yourself, that the church may judge of it.

Cyfrawys. The account in the main is right; he did cheapen the garment, and so departed: But as I can, I hope, put my own goods in what part of my shop I please, I removed that garment for my pleasure, and hung another in its room. He returned and said, Is this the garment? and I said, It was the garment: And every body that sees it must own that it is the garment; as much as this I wear is the garment, or that you wear is the garment; and yet he could charge me with telling a lie, and deceiving him; but I hope the church will clear me, and call *him* to repentance for giving me this trouble, and doing injury to my name as a fair trader.

Dewi. Can any mortal think that this satisfies your own conscience? Whether you removed the garment or not, expecting his return, we shall not consider,

consider, (though it looks very much like it;) but when he asked, Whether that was the garment? you knew he meant the garment he had cheapened before; and you deceived him, telling him against your very conscience that it was the same. Moreover, you would have us think you told him no lie, (in a way that discovers very little sincerity;) whereas it is plain to a demonstration you did: For though that was a garment which you put in the place of the former, yet it was not *the* garment; and you *knew* it was not. He that speaks against his own knowledge any thing with a design to deceive another, tells a lie. — You most certainly did so: And a very awful crime it is. Whether your standing up in vindication of it in the church, discovers most insincerity or folly, I am not able to determine. All who name the name of Christ are under the strongest obligations to depart from all unrighteousness. Your case is plain; your transgression is not small; we are distressed and grieved by you; and should we stand up in your vindication, we should be, not a consistent *church of Christ*, but a *den of thieves*. Are you a *christian*? Did your heavenly Father, then, when he ordered for you the best robe, serve you as you served your brother? Are you a follower of God as a dear child? — Would you be willing any man living should serve you in the same manner? Could you worship God in the evening of that day, and desire him to bless the work of your hands and establish it? —

“ Brethren, if you do, as a church, charge *Cyfrwy*
“ with the sin of fraud and lying, admonish and
“ call him to shew immediate and sincere repent-

“ance; signify it by lifting up your hands:” —
Which they unanimously did.

UPON this, turning to *Cyfrwys*, (who was at that time in tears) *Dewi* proceeded, — “You see the church’s indignation against your sin, and their compassion towards you. Your iniquity they hate, your person they pity; and they ardently desire your real repentance. Pray will you give us an account of your present thoughts upon the matter?”

Cyfrwys. Behold I am vile, sinful, and self-condemned! I have done that which was evil; and it is now bitter. I have dishonoured Christ and wronged my brother. I have grieved the church, and brought a reproach upon the righteous interest of the holy Redeemer. I am grieved to my heart; I loath myself for my abomination; do with me as seemeth good unto you.

WITH many tears he spoke these things, and with many tears the assembly heard them. Then *Yefan*, after he had spoken to him what he thought most applicable, said to the church; “Brethren, if you judge him a sincere penitent, — if you call him to a close walk with God, and testify your love to him; signify it by lifting up your hands:” —
Which was again unanimously done. And so the meeting was concluded in affectionate prayer and praise: And poor *Gwirion* went to *Cyfrwys* immediately, and shewed him all tokens of respect and love.

Theophilus. How the Lord shines upon his own appointments! The wisdom of man may be ready to reckon such methods as these very mean; but among them that believe, spiritual weapons are mighty through God.

Neophytus,

Neophytus. But pray, *Epenetus*, will you favour us with another instance, that may carry us somewhat further into the nature of scriptural church discipline and *Social Religion*?

Epenetus. I told you before of one *Diwall*, that he was visited and reprov'd by one of the Ruling Elders. That man was no great honour to religion. He hardened many a heathen, and grieved the brotherhood. Whatever they charged him with, he always would say, *Prove it, prove it*; and sometimes it might be difficult for them to do so. And when a fact was proved against him to a demonstration, he would say, *I am sorry, what would you have me say more!* Thus he continually distressed them. And evermore he had that passage at his fingers' ends, *If he says he repents, thou shalt forgive him.* But there is a time for the iniquity of the *Amorites* to be full; and you shall briefly hear how it fell out with him.

ONE day a poor brother, whose name was *Diniwed*, bought of him a piece of goods, paid for it and went home. There came accidentally into his house an acquaintance, and, seeing this new piece of goods, asked him what he gave for it? He told him, that he had paid so much for it. I hope, says the acquaintance, you will not take it ill of me, if I say, you do not understand such things. *Diniwed* replied, No, nor of any body else; yea I told the person of whom I bought it, that I did not understand it, and desired him to deal only fairly by me, which he said he would. The acquaintance replied, I wish you had bought yours of the person I bought mine of; for I have the very

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same

same as this for little more than half the money. Pray, says *Diniwed*, who did you buy your's of? He answered, of *Diwall*; and, says *Diniwed*, I bought mine of the very same person; and therefore mine, seeing it is a great deal dearer, ought to be much better than your's. Says the other, I will fetch mine this minute; which he did, and when compared, they were exactly the same.

UPON this poor *Diniwed* was struck with astonishment and confusion. What, to serve a poor brother thus! Did I refer myself to him, to be buyer and seller himself, to be thus served? Well; I must go and tell him his fault; and shall be glad if you will please to go with me. No, no, replied the other, if I should go with you, he might justly blame us both, for breaking that rule, *Go tell him his fault between thee and him ALONE*. Accordingly *Diniwed*, after referring himself and his concern to the Lord, went himself. And, finding *Diwall* at home, he spoke to him as follows:

Diniwed. Sir, I hope I am a poor servant of Christ, in all things willing to live honestly; and I used to think that all the servants of Christ were of that mind. But either I was mistaken in that, or mistaken in you; not in *that*, I am well assured; but with regard to yourself, I am sorry you gave me occasion to fear you have *deceived* me: You told me you would use me *fairly*, when you designed otherwise. You made me pay almost double what the thing was worth.

Diwall. Then the more fool you; and still the greater fool to come here with such a story. Pray go
about

about your business, and, if you know how, make the best of what you have bought.

Dinwidd. Had I lost so much money out of my pocket, or had a professed *Heathen* robbed or deceived me, it would have grieved me but little; but for you a professed *Christian* to do as you did, goes to my very heart. You have sinned against God, you have acted with great injustice towards me; and I think it my duty to call you to repentance.

Diwall. You call me to repentance! Pray do you go home and repent, and mind your duty there. — And so he withdrew in a passion. — The poor man went home, and mourned much for his non-success; desired direction what to do further in it, that he might discharge his duty and glorify the Redeemer. It was not long before he took two brethren with him, and one of them was the very person who had bought the same goods a great deal cheaper; and, coming to *Diwall*, they endeavoured to fasten upon him a conviction of his sin: Especially the person who had bought of him the same goods for very little more than half the price, urged it hard; for he thought he had a very good advantage of his side. But says

Diwall. Then I thank you, master; you reward me well for my kindness: But I am sorry you give me this trouble; and in a word I must tell you, my *friends*, if I can call you so, that I sell and shall sell, as people have wisdom to buy: And other answer you shall not have from your humble servant. — And so withdrew.

Theophilus.

Theophilus. Oh fie! What a base unrighteous disposition this man discovered! And pray what did poor *Diniwed* do then?

Epenetus. Why, he and his companions went directly to the Elder *Didwyll*, and told him all the story punctually. He received them kindly, and told them he would take what care he could of this affair.

Didwyll, upon this, quickly goes to his son-in-law's, *Yefan*'s house, and the other Elders were sent for; he gave them the whole account very distinctly, and one of them went to prayer for divine direction. They unanimously judged that it was the pleasure of their King and Lawgiver, that *Diwall* should be the very next church meeting publicly accused of and dealt with for injustice and covetousness; and a brother was ordered to tell him so.

THE church meeting day being come, and prayer made, *Yefan* spoke to the church in substance as follows:

“ DEAR brethren, unto all those who are lovers
 “ of the Lord (and we hope through grace we are
 “ of that number) it is given as a special charge
 “ that they should *hate evil*: Whereby must be meant
 “ and intended all sin. Sin of every kind is odious,
 “ but there are some sins among the children
 “ of men, which, either in their own nature, or
 “ by reason of some circumstances attending them,
 “ may be called *great evils*: And I here declare
 “ that *covetousness*, however it may be cloaked and
 “ disguised, is one of the *greatest* of evils. In scripture
 “ it is reckoned nothing less than downright
 “ *Idolatry*

" *Idolatry*, and a sin that should not be so much
" as named among *christians*. The covetous person
" the Lord *abhorreth*; and all that serve him should
" be *haters* of covetousness. I grant it is a sin not
" very easily discovered, and therefore the more dan-
" gerous, and to be guarded against with greater
" care. If it enters the heart, it is turned away
" from God. The covetous cannot inherit the king-
" dom; and therefore how important the caution,
" *Take heed and beware of covetousness!* But this
" sin, horrid as it is, and its inseparable attendant
" injustice, I charge a member of our's, *Diwall* here
" present, with; and call him either to justify him-
" self, if he sincerely can, or to signify unfeigned
" and evangelical repentance."

Diwall. Sir, I think it my duty to *justify* my-
self, and trust it will be no difficult task, before
persons of judgment and impartiality. But, until I
hear more said, I think it is enough for me to
reply, that I am *not guilty*.

Didwyll. " I am very willing that *Diwall* should
" be justified, provided it can be done according to
" the rules of the word; but to justify the wicked
" is an abomination. Brethren, he is charged with
" *injustice* and *covetousness*, which is the same with
" denying God to be the chief good, and making
" this present evil world his ultimate end. This,
" awful as it is, we are ready to prove. He that
" withholdeth more than is meet;—he that oppress-
" eth the poor he is concerned with;—he who, if
" he can, does not act with justice in buying or
" selling;—he who makes the things of another
" world give way to the things of this;—I say
" again,

“ again, he who discovers himself to be a walker
“ in these paths, or in either of them, must be
“ deemed a covetous person: But we are ready to
“ prove that *Diwall* walks in them all.”

Diwall. The first I cannot be guilty of, for I
give to the poor: As to the second, I appeal to
the poor I am concerned with: In the third, it
is to be hoped, my customers will clear me: And
in the fourth, my own conscience.

Dysal. “ Brethren, what he gives to the poor is
“ known only to himself, and I suppose to no one
“ else: Our deacons know, that at publick col-
“ lections he gives nothing. — As to the second,
“ let those come forth, to whom he lends a little
“ money, as he pretends without interest, and tell
“ us what slavery in journeys, service, or other ways
“ of *excessive gratitude* they go through for him.
“ Let them come and tell us for what low wages
“ they work, or they must be turned off, and pay
“ him immediately some little sums that lie in their
“ hands. It is by this time grown almost to a
“ proverb concerning all that are under him, *Let*
“ *them take care to keep themselves honest, and he will*
“ *take care to keep them poor*. With regard to the
“ third, we have a very recent instance of his in-
“ justice.” — Here the whole story of *Diniwed*
was mentioned, and how he said, *That he would sell*
as people had wits to buy. — “ And as to the fourth,
“ I know family duty is not kept up, neither con-
“ stantly nor seasonably; he is often pursuing his
“ more beloved views in publick houses, when he
“ ought to be on his knees with his family: And
“ I myself also know, that his poor apprentice is
“ allowed

“ allowed neither time nor candle for any thing
“ that looks like religion.”

Diwyd, another of the Ruling Elders, said, “ Bre-
“ thren, it is our principle to walk in righteous-
“ ness and mercy towards all, and therefore God
“ forbid that we should charge *Diwall* with things
“ that are not true: To do him justice, then, and
“ to shew him mercy, we shall call forth proper
“ evidences to every thing he is charged with. As
“ to his withholding more than is meet, the Dea-
“ cons, we hope, are evidences sufficient.”

Deacons. “ We unanimously declare, that he sel-
“ dom or never gives any thing in our publick
“ collections for the poor; and as to his duty to
“ our honoured Preaching Elders, who by all the
“ church except himself, are esteemed worthy of
“ double honour, considering his worldly substance
“ we are ashamed to mention it: And what he
“ gives comes with such reluctance and sour faces,
“ as if he never received any good by their minis-
“ try: And aukwardly insinuates, that they may
“ live without any help from him or any body
“ else, and that when they want charity it is time
“ enough to come then.”

Diwall. A noble acknowledgment of my kind-
ness! I was under no obligation to give any thing;
so here I hope I have done no injustice.

Diwyd. Whatever part of your substance God
requires, it is rank injustice to withhold; and that
you shall know when you appear before a greater tri-
bunal “ But, brethren, as to oppression, the second
“ thing he is charged with, we have many witness-
“ es, but shall call forth only one or two: Pray,
“ brother

" brother *Anghenus*, tell the church in a few words
" what you know."

Anghenus. Glad to be employed by persons that could pay me, I for some time worked under him; and if he thought it difficult for me to be employed elsewhere, he would make me work for low wages: And then in paying me, he would always make me take in goods, a great part of what was due; which, though I told him I did not want them, he said I must take, or be turned off; and if I did not want them I might sell them: But I never could sell them for near the price I was forced to give.

Diwyd. Brother *Diddrwg*, pray tell the church what you know.

Diddrwg. "When in want, I borrowed of him a little sum of money; and he seemed very ready to lend it, though he borrowed it for me, and said he would have no interest for it; *For*, said he, *it may lie in your way to serve me*. This seemed kind; but I must say I never went through such slavery: I worked, I toiled, I flaved for him; and yet seldom could so much as hope that I pleased him; and glad if I could procure a smile from him at any rate. In short, he rode over me as a perfect tyrant: When I paid him, it was to me as a deliverance from *Egyptian* bondage, and I blessed God.

Diwall. Here the church again may see how well I am rewarded for my kindnesses; however, I promise these *friends* of mine, that I will offend them so no more.

Diwyd. "As to his injustice in selling, we have
" had an awful account of it already in *Diniwedd's*
" case:

“ safe: And as for his way of buying, when it
 “ lies in his power, you shall have it, brethren, in
 “ a very late instance, wherein brother *Achenog* was
 “ concerned. Pray, brother, give the church the
 “ account.”

Achenog. I was of late in great need of money, and had a piece of goods by me, which I took and offered to *Diwall* for sale. He knew I was but in low circumstances, and was necessitated to sell it at any price. Upon my offering it to him, he would not look upon it; but told me he wanted none, and turned away. I called after him, and intreated him to look at it, for it was very good: He looked, and despised it. I desired him to buy it, for I stood in *present need*. He told me, No, he did not care for it; it was not so good as I talked of. I again told him, it would be a kindness to me if he took it; and I should be very much obliged to him. He then said, You must take such a part of the value of it in *goods*. I told him, *that* would by no means suit me: I must have all in *money*. Then said he, If so, you shall have but so much for it; which was not near its value between man and man: But my necessity was great, and I complied. But, says he, What must you have *ready* money? I told him my need was such that it must be so. Then, said he, If you will not bate so much, I will not have your piece, carry it where you please. He knew as well as I, that my time, being a poor man, was precious, and that perhaps I could not immediately meet with a person to buy it: And so under pinching poverty and want, which he took the advantage of, I was forced to undersell my goods.

Diwall.

Diwall. I will stand to it, that my family must be provided for; the word of God makes it my duty, and I must buy and sell as I can. I hope I paid you all, I am not in your debt.

Diwyd. "And then, brethren, as to his pre-
 "ferring the things of this world to the great con-
 "cerns of the Redeemer's kingdom, and future
 "glory; brother *Dysal* has already made that suf-
 "ficiently evident. When have any of our private
 "religious meetings been honoured with his com-
 "pany? How is God worshipped in his family?
 "Perhaps it is not convenient, or prudent, to ask
 "any of those persons who are best acquainted with
 "his religious conduct at home. I am very sorry
 "he appears to be such a person, yet bearing the
 "christian name; and must add, still more sorry
 "that he, who knows a great deal more of himself
 "than all this, or any thing else we can prove;
 "should yet before God and men say, That he is
 "not guilty."

Gruffydd, another of the Elders, said, "In this
 "we may see the dreadful nature of sin in gene-
 "ral, and of the sin of *covetousness* in particular.
 "All sin is blind and daring, and in it persons
 "will proceed, if not restrained, till they are gra-
 "dually hardened and past feeling. But when any
 "fall in love with this present world, he, who is
 "called the *God of this world*, immediately blinds
 "their eyes. They become, to a man, despisers of
 "others, and justifiers of themselves. Thus saith
 "the Lord, *He is a merchant, the balances of deceit*
 "*are in his hands; he loveth to oppress.* And *Ephraim*
 "*said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out*
 "substance;

“ substance; in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me; that were sin..(d) So it is not at all strange to me, nor need it appear strange to this church of Christ, that a covetous oppressor should justify himself.— But I trust that the Eternal God, whom we serve and fear, will guide the church in judgment.”

Dewi. “ Dear brethren, if, from all that you have heard, you do, as a church of the living God, judge, that *Diwall* hath sufficiently justified himself from the charge of *covetousness*, oppression and injustice; signify it by lifting up your hands:” But not one of them did.— Then says he again, “ If you do, as a church of Christ, judge *Diwall* guilty of the aforementioned sins, admonish him for them, and call him to unfeigned repentance; signify it by lifting up your hands:” — Which they unanimously did.

WHEREUPON *Dewi*, addressing himself to *Diwall*, said, “ Christ, by this grieved church of his, calls you to repentance for all your sinful ways, and particularly for your covetousness and oppression.” And on the admonition, and that day’s work, they by earnest prayer desired the blessing of Heaven; and so the meeting concluded.

Theophilus. Well! a church acting in such order, and in such a spirit, may well be termed *Christ’s throne of judgment* upon earth; the very thoughts of which strike my heart with reverential awe.

Neophytus. But, pray, what became of the admonished person?

Epenetus

(d) *Hof. xii. 7, 8,*

Epenetus. The next church meeting he appeared rather more hardened, seemed very angry with the church, especially its officers; and told them, He was sensible he was not without his imperfections no more than themselves, and hoped he should be pardoned as well as they; and said, 'Twas well his happiness did not depend upon them. Whereupon *Jesau* put it to the church; and they unanimously admonished him a *second* time, and called him to repentance.

Christophilus. Thus they manifested the lenity and forbearance of Christ. And what did they do then?

Epenetus. To the *third* church meeting, though sent for, he would not come. The Elders, with grief and sorrow of heart, observed, what rules Christ had left for his churches to walk by; and, when the means appointed to bring offenders to repentance proved ineffectual, what was the *last* duty enjoined them by *Zion's King*. They had conscientiously gone through all the duties but the last, and now their hearts even trembled to be obliged to enter upon it; but *Christ* must be obeyed; his honour, the real dignity of his interest, and the purity of his house, must be maintained. Wherefore says

Dewi. "Brethren, if you do, as a church of
 " Christ, judge it your duty to separate *Diwall*
 " from your communion, and do now actually in
 " the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, *put him away*
 " from among yourselves; signify it by lifting up
 " your hands:" — *Which they unanimously did.* —
 And thereupon *Dewi* solemnly declared him *actually*
 [out off; and with great enlargedness and affection,
 and with many tears, prayed for a blessing upon
 the

the awful ordinance; being remarkably importunate that it might be owned for the subduing of the sin of the *excommunicated* person; that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Neophytus. Were all who were excommunicated dealt with just after this manner?

Epenetus. No; but this was the *ordinary* way. In dealing with *drunkards*, *rebellious children*, and *heretics*, they somewhat varied the method.

Neophytus. I wish you would favour us with the account of them.

Epenetus. Perhaps at another opportunity I may, if God permit: You see at present our time is gone.

Theophilus. May the Eternal Spirit so guide all our ways, that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things!

DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE VII.

The sin of drunkenness exposed. One publicly admonished of it. Debates at the church meeting whether they should immediately proceed to cut him off; carried in the negative. He is not admitted to the Lord's table. He is again admonished: The offender sorely tempted; seasonably visited; and wonderfully restored. His deep humiliation; is received, with tears of joy, to intimate fellowship. Another member accused of the same sin; his trifling excuses: Afterwards humbled, reformed, and recovered: His affectionate and thankful declaration of it before the church.

CHRISTOPHILUS.

WELCOME my dear Neighbours! I began to think you long in coming.

Philalethes. Your thoughts were, no doubt, profitably employed on some important subject.

Christophilus. My thoughts are often attended with much confusion; but what my mind was principally engaged in, while here in waiting, was the sermon I heard last Lord's day, on those words, *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the*

the spirit. (c) The minister with grief of soul observed, What an empty generation of professors of Christianity our day abounds with. Full of confidence, said he, they may be, and full of noise, and full of wine, or full of *ale*; but where are the persons that appear filled with the Spirit of God?

Neophytus. Truly I did not see you at our place, I thought you were *abroad*: Come, let us hear something more of the sermon.

Christophilus. The man seemed to be in an excellent spirit; he was fully for the grace of God, that teacheth us to deny ungodliness. He insisted much upon—The *bounty* of God in his covenant of grace, giving his free *spirit* to his people, the glory of his *inhabitation*, and his *operations* where he so dwelt. He observed to his auditory,—How contrary to revelation, or even reason, must it be, once to imagine, that a person full of wine, or full of *ale*, should be filled with all the fulness of God, or, according to the text, *filled with the spirit*. He appealed to all the contents of the *gospel*; he appealed to the *church*; he appealed to the *world*; he appealed to *wives* and *children* half starved; yea, he appealed to their own *consciences*;—and he was very particular and affectionate upon each of these, with much concern and many tears; and told them, that the prating profession of a Tipler did but draw a cloud over the grace of God, and aggravate his own guilt.

Neophytus: And how was it with the auditory?

N

Christophilus.

(c) *Eph. v. 18,*

Christophilus. Why, really, some of them were in tears, and discovered very great concern; and some looked about them and took *snuff*, and seemed to care for none of those things: And there were some who discovered uneasiness and indignation in their countenances, and with a sneer would look at each other: And, when they came out, I heard one of them say to his companions, — *He gave it us; is this preaching the gospel?**

Theophilus,

* THE Author here hath a peculiar reference to the woollen manufacturers in *Wiltshire*: The following is a summary of their character as described by his pen.

“THE people concerned in the staple trade of *England*, the wool
 “business, (and their brethren the wool-combers and weavers, are
 “generally of the same stamp) except a few who like brands are
 “plucked out of the burning, are the scum of the land, worse than
 “the plague in the parishes where they are planted. One of them
 “shall drink as much as should satisfy ten, and then stagger, reel, and
 “rave, and curse the trade, and blame all the world but himself.
 “The promoting a drinking life seems to them a principal end of
 “living. They have their fixed hours of sending for ale and each is
 “to be the messenger in his turn. They have also their pitcher
 “laws and forfeitures. Upon entering into business there must be
 “a treat, and the same at parting. There must be no buying
 “or selling but at ale-houses (or, as *Bolton* calls them, *bell-houses*)
 “let the business be never so small. They tenaciously adhere to
 “the solemn observation of their feast days, or *holy days*, which
 “the prince of darkness and themselves have consecrated to the
 “patrons of their trade, which always end in plenty of ale. They
 “have also frequent wagers always paid in ale; and when at the
 “ale-house, there is not a meaner thing in their esteem than to
 “be a *starter*, and to hinder the house, as they phrase it. They
 “have frequently evening clubs, kept generally in some private
 “house, where the master excels in stories and laughter, reflections
 “and banter, They have also frequent invitations to new
Ale”

Theophilus. But sure none of those drinking persons pretend to religion.

Christophilus. That they do; and many of them abound in confidence, — are great casuists, — and, while they are drinking a dozen of ale, will examine and determine I do not know how many controversies.

Neophytus. Well, the Lord be with his preaching servants, in such places! Sure they have enough, without extraordinary support, to break their hearts.

Theophilus. There hath not been, in the memory of any man living, an ale-house at *Pothaina*; but some of us remember a net spread in our sight. Not far from us there was an ale-house set up with the sign of the *Dragon*: The fellow, who kept it, used all the methods he was master of to ensnare us. He made a supper, and invited our families;

N 2

but

“*Ale-Fats*, whither they carry their children, who, if they drink well, are praised as father’s *own* boys: In this way of death they teach them, and thus the infection spreads from parents to children, till idleness, drunkenness, poverty, confidence and pride, spread among them like a flood.” — But it were well if the infamous practice here described were confined to that one branch of trade above specified; whereas, alas! the infection awfully spreads among other trades and occupations, to the disgrace of our land, the danger and distress of churches, the temporal ruin and the eternal destruction of many thousands of families! — What a striking contrast does that account exhibit, which the Rev. Mr. *Hugh Peters*, in the last century gave of *New England*, in his sermon before the *English Parliament*! The account is indeed remarkably singular, yet very true, viz. “That for the seven years he had been there, he did not see a *beggar*, he did not hear an *oath*, nor did his eyes behold a *drunkard*.” Such was the beauty of those congregational churches following Christ in the wilderness!

but no parent or child, master or servant went. He sent some of his dainties, with his humble service, desiring us to accept of a taste; but we all refused. And one day, complaining to an acquaintance of his, how unkind the inhabitants of *Potheina* were, for never suffering any who belonged to them to enter within his doors, whereby his beer was spoiled, and he half ruined;—his acquaintance, being waggishly disposed, told him, that he had the *wrong sign*; for the inhabitants of *Potheina* were, to a man, resolved to oppose the *Dragon*, but professed themselves followers of the *Lamb*; and therefore he thought he would do well to change his sign. The fellow accordingly did, and set up the sign of the *Lamb*; and one day, meeting a servant of mine, said to him, I am very sorry I offended the good inhabitants of *Potheina*, by a disagreeable sign over my door; my humble service to them, and let them know, that I have parted with it, and have now the sign of the *Lamb*. Says my servant —“ I fancy our people will think, that though it hath put on the appearance of a *Lamb*, it still retains the qualities of a *Dragon*, and will not come near it.” (f) Nor did we;—and after two or three brewings, which his friends from a great distance helped him to drink out, he left the place, and we never had an ale-house near us since.

Neophytus. But are not publick houses lawful?

Theophilus. Certainly, and expedient too, for the convenience of *travellers*, provided there be no more than what are *necessary*, and provided the laws of Christ

(f) *Rev.* xiii. 11.

Christ be there duly regarded.—But here is our dear *Epenetus* just come.

Epenetus. My dear brethren and friends, excuse me, I was detained by a particularly urgent business. I find your company and conversation always agreeable, and therefore it is not usual with me to be the last.

Philalethes. We could wish to know how they managed it at *Caerludd*, in their dealing with publick offenders?

Epenetus. There was among them a person, whose name was *Medd-wyn*, who gave them a great deal of trouble, and, as a root of bitterness, was like to defile many. Upon his first profession of christianity, and for a considerable time after he became a church member, he behaved well; but afterwards began to discover too much love to strong liquors: And, as that inclination appeared, the brethren and officers of the church gave him all seasonable caution and advice; which he sometimes seemed to take kindly, but at other times it appeared by his countenance that cautions were not very acceptable to him. However, upon a time, he drank of *Meth-y-glyn* to that excess, that all the symptoms of drunkenness were upon him, and he was led home. Honest *Didwyll* and *Diwyd*, the Elders, hearing of it, went immediately to him, and charged him with the sin, which he could not deny; observed to him many aggravating circumstances attending it, and desired he would the very next church meeting come, and in the presence of all, profess publick repentance.—He told them he would consider of it; however he

N 3

thought

thought a more private way of dealing with him would bring less reproach upon christianity.

Didawyll. What your concern may be for the credit of christianity, we cannot tell; and how far christianity is already reproached on your account, you cannot tell: There are thousands in your neighbourhood that would very gladly take up any thing to the reproach of your religion. Your sin is already taken up in the lips of talkers,—*report*, say they, *and we will report it*. If they had but the account of your publick repentance to report also, it would, in some measure, even in their own consciences, justify the laws of our dear Redeemer, and vindicate the church in their holy profession. Christ is injured in his name and interest, his children are grieved, and you must think the haters of godliness are hardened, and their mouths are opened to speak evil of the things they know not: Your own conscience must be under guilt, and you must at present dwell at a distance from true peace in your mind;—and therefore unfeigned *publick* * repentance appears to be your immediate duty on all accounts.

Meddwyn.

* THEY did not look upon *drunkenness* to be an offence that required previous private dealing, first by one, and then by two, and finally, in case of impenitence, open reprehension; but the offence being of a publick nature, the offender was brought *immediately* to publick repentance. Not but they had liberty in brotherly love to use private means; but his sin being a *publick* reproach upon the Redeemer's kingdom, *private* repentance could never be thought a sufficient vindication of the holiness of Christ's laws and interests. "Those who had sinned before all, were rebuked before all, that others might fear." Nothing can be more reasonable than that a visible wound should be visibly healed,

Meddwyn. So I do repent; I tell you so; and I am willing you should tell the church so:—And this I hope will be thought publick repentance.

Didawyll. No; whether it is *repentance* or not, may be a question; but whether it is publick or private, is out of question;—for we know it is only a private one. We can only say, that you told us in a *private way* that you repent: But the church of Christ, whom you have grieved, must in the presence, and according to the laws of their King, judge of these things.

Meddwyn. As I said before, so I say again, I will *consider* what you say.

Diwyd. I wish you truly may; and I heartily desire you may *consider*, when you have a cup in hand, whether it is lawful and expedient to drink it.

Neophytus. A good advice:—*Consideration* might, rationally speaking, have a good influence upon the morals of men. There are very close questions proposed to consideration, which relate to this affair. “Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek

N 4

“ mixt

healed, in open repentance. Whoever loves Christ, will desire it; and when any appear backward *thus* to profess repentance for scandalous crimes, they may be justly suspected of not repenting at all. When *Peter* gave publick offence, *Paul* withstood him to the face, and *reproved him before all.* (*Gal.* ii. 11, 14.) Nor did the apostle *John* deal privately with *Diotrephes*, who had so publicly sinned against the brethren. (3 *John* 9, 10.) And the *Corinthians* had no instructions for their personal dealing with the notorious offender mentioned 1 *Cor.* v. 1, 11,

“ mixt wine. Look not thou upon the wine when
 “ it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup,
 “ when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth
 “ like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.” (*Prov.*
xxiii. 29—32.) *

Theophilus. Right, *Neophytus*, did young and old
 through the land but duly consider their ways, and
 thousands of haughty-looking well-fed landlords would
 be put to *consider* what business they should next
 take up.—Excuse us both, good *Epenetus*, and pro-
 ceed.

Epenetus. However, though he would not *promise*
 them, yet at the next church meeting he was pre-
 sent; and after prayer and exhortation, *Dewi* spoke
 to the church as follows:

“ DEAR brethren, through the rich grace of God
 “ we have given up ourselves in church fellowship
 “ to our Redeemer, to walk in all his statutes and
 “ ordinances blamelessly; and the more we conform
 “ to this our holy resolution and engagement, the
 “ more our Redeemer is glorified, and the more
 “ our true peace, usefulness and glory. *All* sin tends
 “ to darken and becloud the mind, and drive us
 “ to a distance from the refreshing presence of our
 “ Father: But there are *some* sins that at once lay
 “ our glory in the dust, under which we must say,
 “ — ‘The crown is fallen from our heads, and woe
 “ unto

* DRINK not the third glass, which thou canst not tame
 When once it is within thee; but before,
 May’st rule it as thou list; and pour the shame,
 Which IT would pour on thee, upon the floor.
 It is most just to throw *that* on the ground,
 Which would throw *me* there, if I kept the round.

HERBERT,

“ unto us that we have sinned!’ Among sins of this
“ kind do I reckon *Drunkennes*; or, drinking liquors
“ of strength to *excess*. And though the depraved
“ mind of man may look upon this as a matter of
“ small moment, yet if we take an impartial view
“ of it we shall find there are dreadful aggrava-
“ tions attending it. It is a sin that directly tends
“ to destroy our bodies, the workmanship of God;
“ —feters and enslaves the rational powers of the
“ more noble soul; is an ungrateful, detestable abuse
“ of the bounties of heaven; —puts one out of all
“ the way of service to God; —yea, sets up *another*
“ God against him: And I doubt not but it was
“ of such the apostle wrote weeping, —‘ Who were
“ enemies to the cross of Christ, whose God was
“ their *belly*, who gloried in their *shame*.’ (g) —
“ Dear brethren, though this sin is a most enor-
“ mous evil, there is one present, and a member
“ of us, who is guilty of it. The spirit of God
“ says, *Be not deceived—Drunkards shall not inherit*
“ *the kingdom of God*. (h) It is indeed supposed
“ that one who is called a brother may be a drunk-
“ ard, but then *with him*, it is said, *we must not eat*.
“ (i) *Meddwyn*, you are here charged with the sin;
“ consider the horrid nature of the transgression, —
“ what way is left for you to glorify an offended
“ God, and to comfort a grieved church. You are
“ desired to speak.”

Meddwyn. My business leads me into company,
and to many snares which I cannot avoid; and my
particular calling is of that nature, that I stand in

N 5

need

(g) *Phil*, iii, 19.(h) *1 Cor*. vi, 10.(i) *1 Cor*, v, 11.

need now and then of a supporting draught; but what, and how often, I humbly hope I may be thought the most competent judge. I own I have sinned, I was very sorry for it the next day, and ever since; but I can hardly think my crime such an aggravated one, as you have expressed it. I do not like making the worst of things so; nevertheless, a sin it was, to be sure, but it is said, *That the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*, and so I hope I have reason to be easy. I shall take more care for the time to come. I am sure I should watch, for there are many that wait for my halting, though they are not blameless themselves.

Yefan. " It must be granted, that drunkenness
" is a very great sin; denies God and destroys man;
" and that *Meddwyn* is guilty of it wants no proof.
" His inclination hath been observed before now, and
" he hath often been cautioned; and his breaking
" through all restraints must indicate a depraved ap-
" petite. I am glad however to hear *Meddwyn* say,
" He is sorry; and heartily with this sorrow may
" manifest itself to be of a godly sort. But some
" things he hath said draw a cloud over it: He
" lays the fault on his business and calling, which,
" by consequence, lays it at the door of Providence;
" much like our first parents, *The woman thou gavest*
" *me*. And then he extenuates his crime, and men-
" tions the blood of Christ as cleansing from all sin;
" whereupon he says he hath reason to be easy: *But*
" *this is not looking to him whom he hath pierced.*
" And lastly, he seems to lay his promised watch-
" fulness, for the future, on too narrow a found-
" ation, namely, that of others watching for his
" halting

“ halting, who themselves are not blameless; whereby
 “ he sinfully recriminates.—But, that the church
 “ may see things in a clearer light, I desire my
 “ brethren and fellow Elders to speak their thoughts.”

Diwyd. “ I humbly conceive, that the sin of
 “ *drunkenness* deserves to be treated with some de-
 “ gree of warmth and indignation. A drunkard
 “ wrongs himself and others;—a drunkard fights
 “ against God, and turns his own mercies against
 “ him;—a drunkard sets up another God, and
 “ spreads infection wherever he goes. A sin this,
 “ for which tender parents were to deliver up their
 “ child to death, themselves being evidences against
 “ him.* (k) Drunkards were esteemed the children
 “ of *Belial*. Woe to the drunkards of *Ephraim*!—
 “ Woe to the drunkards of *Christendom*! Strong
 “ drink shall be bitter to them that drink it; and
 “ though they may at present flatter themselves, that
 “ they shall have peace, while they add drunken-
 “ ness to thirst, yet we are well assured *they shall*
 “ *not inherit the kingdom of God*.—As for this mem-
 “ ber of our’s, I do not see that his repentance

N 6

“ bears

(k) *Deut.* xxi. 18—21.

* IT is observable, that the passage of divine writ here re-
 ferred to, includes not only *drunkenness*, but also *gluttony*, (or, eating
 to excess, and an immoderate gratification of the palate) for which
 so awful and exemplary a punishment was inflicted: And though
 the *former* falls more immediately under the publick observation,
 and more shamefully incapacitates the delinquent from discharging
 incumbent duties, during his state of intoxication; yet the *latter*
 it is to be feared, is equally common, and in a sense equally
 criminal; as it gradually undermines the constitution, abuses the
 bounties of heaven, and is a daring violation of an express law,
 (1 Cor. x. 31.)

“ bears any proportion to his crime. He says he
“ is sorry; and I believe that he is *sorry* that it is
“ *known*.—I hope our King, whom we serve, will
“ guide his church in judgment. He calls upon us
“ to mourn, and consider his controversy with us.
“ I am not against receiving the true repentance of
“ any, but as I cannot see it in *Meddwyn*, I know
“ of no step more proper for us to take, then *im-*
“ *mediately*, in the name of Christ, to separate him
“ from us.”

Gruffydd, another of the *Elders*, said,—“ Dear
“ brethren, sin is the abominable thing, that God
“ hateth; but we must see that we discover towards
“ all men that pity, which will always be attended
“ with kindness, long-suffering, and unwearied en-
“ deavours to restore a backslider. Without this we
“ can never make a due representation of the com-
“ passions of our merciful and faithful High Priest,
“ or consider how it *may* be with ourselves.—
“ ‘Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye
“ which are spiritual, restore such an one *in the*
“ *spirit of meekness*; considering *thyself*, lest thou
“ also be tempted.’ Hath the brother sinned? It is
“ granted he hath greatly sinned: But in the spirit
“ of meekness let us attempt his recovery. Does
“ there any thing like repentance appear in him?
“ Let us bless God for that, and encourage it.
“ But if we think that his repentance bears no pro-
“ portion to his sin, let us endeavour to bring it up
“ thereto, by admonishing him in our Lord’s name,
“ and praying for him to the God of all grace.
“ But *immediate separation* I think not adviseable.”

Addwyn;

Addfwyn, another *Ruling Elder*, spoke as follows:
“ Brethren, I most readily grant that, with regard
“ to some sins, there is a great deal in what our
“ beloved brother *Gruffydd* hath observed. For in-
“ stance, the man that is an *Heretick* should, after
“ the *first* and *second* admonition, be rejected (1)—
“ but where is it said, The man that is a *drunkard*,
“ after the first and second admonition, reject? I
“ do not see, that in case of *gross* immoralities, like
“ drunkenness, we have any rules by which to pro-
“ ceed gradually by admonition. The *Corinthians*
“ were not directed to use any such methods with
“ the incestuous person, but immediately to *put him*
“ *away from among themselves*; (m) and why not deal
“ in like manner with a *drunkard*?”

Didawyll. “ Dear brethren, I hope I shall never
“ be an advocate for iniquity, or once open my
“ mouth in vindication of sin; and drunkenness I
“ look upon to be a very great one. May we and
“ succeeding ages be continually on our guard against
“ it! So far as it enters and prevails, christianity
“ is banished.—But with regard to the case under
“ consideration, granting that drunkards should be
“ immediately separated from a church of Christ,
“ I cannot allow that he of whom we speak, who
“ is called a brother with us, is proved to be a
“ *drunkard*. That he hath been guilty of drunken-
“ ness we own, nor doth he deny it: But must he
“ from thence be denominated a drunkard? Let
“ him appear obstinate, refusing to reform, before
“ we fix his character. I grant his sin is a very
“ *gross*

(1) *Tit*, iii, 10.(m) 1 *Cor*, v. 13.

" gross one, but I cannot see it our duty immediately to separate him from our fellowship, without previous admonitions and calls to repentance. I humbly desire the judgment of our honoured *Pastor and Teacher* on the subject."

Dewi. " It is certainly our duty, as a church of Christ, to stand up for him, our King; the holiness of his laws, and purity of his institutions, against all sin, and its appearance. But this must be according to his revealed pleasure; otherwise, while we oppose one sin, we are insensibly entering into another. Church-dealings with offenders are not properly of a *vindictive* or punishing nature, but *corrective* and instructive; the sole end whereof being the repentance and recovery of the offender: And by such *repentance*, Christ is more glorified than by any sudden rejection; for, to reject such a person when recovered, would be to oppose Christ who receives him. Christ most certainly approves of the penitent person, and the church by excluding him testifies he doth not; which must be a very unjust representation of the Redeemer. But if upon examination, and the use of means, repentance cannot be discovered, the church must separate such from among themselves, either with greater speed or delay, as, after prayer and consultation, may be thought necessary."

Yefan. " I am of the same mind with my dear brother *Dewi*, being thoroughly persuaded, that nothing is to be regarded so much as the glory of Christ; and that nothing among poor sinners gives more glory to Christ, than a *looking* to him whom
" they

“ they have pierced, and *mourning*. True repentance with reformation glorifies Christ, preserves the church pure, and maintains the wisdom, equity, and holiness of Christ’s institutions, before all the world of angels and men. I think it is the *safest* way, for the church to seek this desirable end, by *repeated* admonitions: And therefore, *Meddwyn*, if you can give us some further account of your repentance, I pray you now to do it.”

Meddwyn. Why, Sir, I said that I am sorry; and so I am very sorry, and I think that is repentance; and I desire I may do so no more: This hath been much trouble of mind to me.

Dewi. “ Now, dear brethren, if you do, as a church of Christ, judge *Meddwyn*’s repentance to be evangelical and satisfactory, signify it by lifting up your hands:”—*Which no person did.*

THEN said *Dewi*,—“ You that think it our duty to proceed immediately to cut him off, signify it by lifting up your hands:”—*Which two of the Elders, and several more did.*

THEN said *Dewi*, “ You that think it our duty to admonish him to due and unfeigned repentance for his detestable sin, signify it by lifting up your hands:”—*Which the Pastor, the Teacher, and the other two Ruling Elders did, together with a great majority of the church.*

THEN said *Dewi* to the church, “ You see, brethren, how the Lord Jesus determines the minds of the *majority*; this we take to be *his* mind, and in this, as in all like cases, the cheerful concurrence of the *minority* is now their duty and their glory; wherefore, if you do, as a church of Christ,
“ admonish

“ admonish *Meddwyn*, and call him to evangelical
 “ repentance for the great sin of drunkenness, and
 “ to a reformation and close walk with God for
 “ the future, signify it by lifting up your hands:”
 — *Which they unanimously did.*

THEN said *Dewi* to *Meddwyn*, “ You hear the
 “ voice of the church, yea, the voice of Christ by
 “ the church. Though you say you are sorry, and
 “ repent, your repentance meets with no acceptance:
 “ We are all afraid it is not with you as it should
 “ be; you are therefore admonished and called to
 “ repentance and reformation: I hope we shall pray
 “ for you, and wait to see you bring forth fruit
 “ meet for repentance. Earnestly beg of God to
 “ fill you with his spirit, give repentance not to
 “ be repented of, and watch and pray that you en-
 “ ter not into temptation. This is what we have
 “ to say to you at this time.”

UPON this a godly brother in the church stood
 up, and (leave being asked and granted) said,—
 I desire with submission to know, how I am to carry
 it towards this *admonished* person; which perhaps se-
 veral more may want to know as well as myself.

Yefan. “ He hath not in the judgment of the
 “ church cleared himself; they could not receive his
 “ repentance as full and unfeigned; and therefore,
 “ it is expressly said, *with him we must not eat.*
 “ Again, we are commanded to *withdraw* ourselves
 “ from every brother that walketh disorderly, and
 “ have no *company* with him, that he may be *ashamed*;
 “ still not counting him as an *enemy*, but admo-
 — nishing

“ nishing him as a brother. (n) And I therefore
 “ declare to *Meddwyn*, that until the church hath
 “ received satisfaction in his repentance, — to the
 “ Lord’s table he must not come. — In the mean
 “ time, pray for him, and have no fellowship with
 “ him, but what calls him to repentance.”

Christophilus. I thank you, dear *Epenetus*, for this account. Their love to Christ and zeal for his honour; their obedience to his laws, and hatred against sin; their compassion towards the sinner, and mutual brotherly love; and the chearful concurrence of the *minority*, without wrangling and displeasure, — made the whole beautiful! — But pray, *Epenetus*, please to proceed in the account of the admonished person.

Epenetus. Why a great many things spoken in the church meeting stuck very close to him. — When he thought that his sin might be truly great, he seemed, under some humility of mind, to think the church was in their *duty*, and did him justice. — But when thoughts, that his sin was not so very great, prevailed, he judged the church and its Elders, as *injurious*, *disaffected*, and *prejudiced* against him: And then he was careless in his walk, often ready to run into the way of that sin, for which the church admonished him. — He was visited by some of the *Elders* and *brethren*; who endeavoured to impress upon him a due sense of the greatness of his *sin*, — the *reproach* he brought upon the gospel, — and the *grief* of the godly on his account. They insisted
 also

(n) 2 *Thess.* iii, 8, 14, 15.

also on the love of Christ, the design of his death, and the grace of his spirit; prayed with him, — and prevailed upon him to think, that all their concern for him sprung from love.

Christophilus. Well, he could not say that no man cared for his soul: They have certainly their lines fallen in pleasant places, who are planted in churches carefully walking in the order, and according to the rules, of the gospel; where the members exhort one another daily, lest any among them be hardened by the *deceitfulness of sin*. — But I have interrupted you; pray how did the man go on?

Epenetus. This seemed to have a very good effect upon him: He abstained from all appearance of evil, kept out of the way of temptation, and appeared very thankful to his friends for their care and love; went to visit them, kept to their private meetings, prayed with them, and mourned much with tears, under a sense of his evil; and the brethren were greatly pleased with him. — But ere he was aware, he began to be too much pleased with himself, and by little and little dropped his watchfulness; and so a day or two before the next church meeting, he fell in some measure into the same sin again.

Theophilus. Oh! the very thoughts of this grieve me! *Spiritual pride* insensibly invaded his heart! How seasonable, always, our blessed Lord's advice! — *What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch: (o)*
And

And again, *Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.* (p) But how went it at the church meeting?

Epenetus. Why, truly, his legs could hardly carry him thither; his heart was much shut up, and flavishly disposed.—However, to the church meeting he came; and after prayer and exhortation, *Yefan* spoke to him as follows:

“ BROTHER, I am glad to see you here, and hope
 “ that this day, you will give glory to the Redeem-
 “ er. It is with a great deal of pleasure I have
 “ heard several of the brethren relate the merciful
 “ dealings of God with your soul. Though back-
 “ slidings are evil and bitter, they are not things
 “ unknown in *Israel*. We can never be thankful
 “ enough, brother, for the grace of that promise,
 “ *I will heal their backslidings, and love them freely.*
 “ (q) It was upon experience of the power of that
 “ grace that *David* sang the praises of the Lord,
 “ his shepherd, who restored his soul.—Our sins
 “ proceed from ourselves—we fall by our iniquity
 “ —but our recovery is wholly from God. May
 “ we for ever bless his name, who *forgiveth all our*
 “ *iniquities, and healeth all our diseases!* (r) Now
 “ you are desired to bear your publick testimony
 “ against your sin, and for the grace of God, to
 “ his glory and our comfort.”

Meddwyn. I am at a great loss what to say; I have sinned without doubt, and, as I said before, I am sorry for it. In many things we offend all; and perhaps in this way I may sin more than some others

(p) *Matth.* xxvi. 41. (q) *Hos.* xiv. 4. (r) *Psalms* ciii. 3.

others; but God forgiveth iniquity, transgression and sin; and I hope mine; and this is all I can say.

Yefan. "I am amazed! What is the matter! Did not you, brother *Gruffydd*, tell me of bro-kenness, tears, and self-loathings? Did not you tell me how he bemoaned himself, how he abhorred the sin, and hated the snares; and admitted the grace of God in dealing so mercifully with his soul? Sure this is not all you meant thereby!"

Gruffydd. "No, Sir; what I told you was, to the best of my knowledge, strictly true: And there are others who were eye and ear-witnesses of the same encouraging tokens of unfeigned repentance; but what is the matter now, I am as great a stranger to as yourself. If any brother present can give any account of it, he is desired to stand up and declare what he knows; — unless *Meddwyn* himself pleases to give us some further account of his case."

Meddwyn. No, I shall say no more; I said I do repent; and Christ says, "If he says *I repent*, thou shalt forgive him."

UPON this a brother stood up and said,—"I think it my duty to declare what I heard as I came along to the meeting this day: A person who is a well-wisher to us, told me, that he saw *Meddwyn* drank very lately."

Dewi. I desire you would, *Meddwyn*, tell us the very truth, whether it was so or not?

Meddwyn. I do not think I was drunk, though perhaps I drank a little more than did me good: I know what I said and did well enough.

Dewi.

Devi. " Dear brethren, we have very great
" reason to humble ourselves before our Eternal
" Sovereign. Our endeavours are blasted, and our
" expectations are disappointed. Let this be for
" our humiliation. We see that he who standeth,
" should take heed lest he fall; for the very en-
" trance of sin, is like the breaking forth of wa-
" ters, where a small stream prepares the way for
" a flood. Some few years ago, this member of
" our's would not have believed that the time was
" coming, when he should, to the great grief of
" the church, thus appear bound with the cords of
" his sins, if the wisest and dearest of his friends
" had told him so: And perhaps a week or two
" ago, when he discovered those encouraging tokens
" of repentance, he would not have believed that
" another fall was so near at hand. But Oh, how
" dangerous it is to drop christian watchfulness!
" How dangerous it is to be pleased with ourselves,
" or trust our own hearts! — Oh! pity and pray
" for your poor fellow-member, who stands here
" amongst you, ensnared, entangled, and bound!
" You have, as a church of Christ, admonished him
" *once*; and if you do now, in the name of Christ
" your King, admonish him the *second* time, and
" call him to repentance and reformation; signify
" it by lifting up your hands: " — *Which they una-*
nimously did. — And *Devi* desired *Meddwyn* to take
notice of it; and the brethren to observe their duty
towards him.

Yefan. " Brethren, there is one thing which I
" must at present remark: Our admonished bro-
" ther mentioned that word of Christ, *If he says*
" I

“ *I repent, thou shalt forgive him*; implying that
 “ what he said should be looked upon by the church
 “ as sufficient. But I must observe, that a publick
 “ notorious immorality is vastly different from a
 “ private personal offence, which our Lord there
 “ treats of. Besides, the words were not fairly
 “ quoted; our Lord says, *If he repent*; and then,
 “ *If he turn to thee*; which expressions denote an
 “ open and hearty repentance; which will always
 “ be for making all possible *reparation*. And can
 “ any one be a true penitent who perverts the
 “ words and meaning of our Saviour; and with a
 “ deriding face says, I am sorry, what would you
 “ have me say more? It is written, *If he says he*
 “ *repents, thou shalt forgive him*?”

THEN sometime being spent in prayer, bemoaning themselves under their non-success; begging the blessing of God on this *second* admonition, and any further private endeavours that might be yet used for the recovery of the backslider, — the meeting concluded.

Neophytus. Pray, *Epenetus*, go on with your story.

Epenetus. The admonished person seemed much displeased with the church, nor was he well pleased with himself; there was nothing pleased him. He could think but of one way to make himself *easy*, and that was to *forget* all; and there was but one way to forget all, which was to make himself *drunk*, and *keep* himself so. A desperate temptation! Which he was just entering into: And as he was upon going out of his house to execute this dreadful design, an honest godly *brother* of the church came to visit him; and told him that he was come to see him

him with a christian religious intention, but was afraid he came at an unseasonable time, as he apprehended he was going out. Ay, says the other, so I was; but my business is not so urgent but I can stay, and will stay, now you are come. Upon this, says that brother, whose name was

Perthwyl. Some hours before I came hither, I was thinking of several parables spoken by our great Shepherd: That of the woman searching for the lost piece of money, and rejoicing when she found it; and that of the man leaving his ninety and nine sheep in the wilderness, and going after the one that went astray, and searching till he found it, then carrying it home with joy: And of the prodigal's return to his father's house, and the father's kind and joyful reception of him, who, when he saw him afar off, ran to meet him, fell upon his neck and kissed him, and discovered the greatest demonstrations of joy. Upon that, with many tears I thought of you, and found love and pity towards you, and earnest desires after your recovery out of the snares of the tempter. But many discouragements immediately seized me. I thought I was weak and utterly insufficient for any work of that kind, and unworthy to be honoured with any such service; And I thought, if I attempted it, I should only offend you, and put you more out of the way of repentance. But still I could not rest, and that scripture among others, greatly encouraged me, "That we should exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of us be *hardened* through the deceitfulness of sin." So I sent up my desires to God for success, and hither I am come;
and

and before we proceed any further, will you give me leave to go to prayer with you?

Meddwyn. Yes, with all my heart; but let us go into a convenient room.

UPON this, having entered the room, and made the door safe, they both fell down before the Lord; and *Porthwyl* prayed under a more than ordinary gale of the spirit of prayer. He mourned, he cried, he confessed, petitioned and pleaded with many tears; and his mouth was filled with arguments: The recovery, Oh! the recovery of his poor fellow-member, bound with the cords of his sins, and led captive, he earnestly sought! and to *mercy* he appealed.

Theophilus. Ay, this is like *primitive* christianity indeed! This is following the Lamb; this is making a representation of the compassions and bowels of a merciful Redeemer; and discharging the incumbent duty of brotherly love.

Epenetus. Prayer being over, they got up; and after some time,

Porthwyl says, come my poor friend and brother, I hope I came this day to seek after you according to our Lord's will. As I came along, I was hoping the hand of our Redeemer was in it: Let me know how it is with you?

Meddwyn. If you had staid a little longer, you would have found me in the way of death and darkness: No body can tell how it hath been with me, a poor tempted ensnared sinner. I *heard* of temptation many a time, but I never knew what it was, to lie under it until now. Every part of me entangled and bound! even my very judgment:
And

And my *will* alienated from God, and bent on the ways of destruction! And into those ways I was actually going to seek for rest when you came:— For I thought I could never be *easy* without forgetting all; and imagined nothing could bring that about but *drunkenness*, upon which I was resolved. But blessed be God that ever you came! I look upon you as a messenger mercifully sent from God. I take it as his mercy, and it melts me; and I take it as your kindness, and love you. Your speaking of the lost sheep entered my heart, and the prodigal's reception stuck to my soul; but when in prayer you mentioned Christ's loosing the person bound by Satan, and that he came to preach liberty to the captives, and to open the prison-doors to them that are bound: I thought I felt my cords breaking, and my soul relieved. I am amazed, that I am not in a publick-house drunk; I am amazed to find myself mourning before the God of pardons! I am amazed at his mercy! Blessed be God for salvation! Blessed be God for the church, and their dealing with me! And blessed be God for you, brother, and for this day's work. I hope I shall never forget it.

Epenetus. Upon this *Meddwyn* went to prayer, and mourned much before the Lord, bemoaning himself as one ashamed and confounded: He, in a very particular manner, bewailed his late aggravated provocations; and with many tears blessed God for counteracting his hellish purpose, by graciously sending his servant to him, &c.

AFTER this they spent some time together in christian conversation, and could not tell how to part:

O

But

But at last, in the dearest love they took leave of each other, and *Meddwyn* promised to visit *Porthwyl* the next day at such an hour.

Porthwyl could not go home without acquainting one of the *Elders*, and some of the *brethren*, with what he had seen and heard that day; and told them, that the admonished brother would be at his house the next day at such an hour. Accordingly he was, and there several met him: And when they heard him speak of what God had done for him, it was like receiving him from the dead. They prayed, they wept, they mourned, they rejoiced together: It was a reviving season. They all longed for the church-meeting day, but especially the admonished brother.

Theophilus. So when God gave repentance, he was not backward to own it. I have, indeed; always suspected those persons, who are seemingly more ashamed to *repent*, than they are to *sin*. But pray, give us some account of the next church-meeting.

Epenetus. When the day came, *Deawi* spoke as follows:

“ Dear brethren, a great part of our business,
“ while on our pilgrimage towards glory, is to
“ give thanks to our God and Father, who hath
“ delivered us from the power of darkness, and
“ translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.
“ But though we are, through grace, in this kingdom of light, we have not arrived beyond all
“ adversities; and our adversaries are numerous.—
“ We wrestle not only with flesh and blood, but
“ with principalities and powers. Our present state
“ is

" is *militant*, we have on the armour of God; and
 " the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but
 " mighty through God to the pulling down strong
 " holds: Precious the armour, glorious the cause,
 " and sure is the victory; for the shout of a King
 " is among us! But let not the saints sleep as
 " do others: The careless are often carried into
 " captivity. Let us be sober and vigilant; for our
 " adversary the Devil goeth about, like a roaring
 " lion, seeking whom he may devour. He broke
 " in upon us, and carried into captivity one of our
 " brethren; but, in the glorious name and victori-
 " ous strength of Him who led captivity captive, we
 " put on our armour, and endeavoured to recover
 " him out of the snare: And we hope the Cap-
 " tain of our salvation hath prevailed. I say, we
 " *hope* so; and our poor ensnared brother is here
 " among us this day, to give some account of
 " what he hath passed through, and of the gracious
 " arm of our Redeemer, put forth for his relief.
 " Brother, you are desired to speak."

Meddwyn. My honored and beloved fathers and
 brethren, (though it is no honour for you to be
 so called by such a person as I am) I have reason
 indeed to say to the Lord, *Forgive mine iniquity,*
for it is great. I have sinned against light, know-
 ledge, and innumerable mercies. I have dishonoured
 God, made his enemies to blaspheme, and grieved
 the godly. Oh, dear children of God, have pity
 upon me! have pity upon me! Who can tell what
 I have done? The Holy Spirit of God is grieved;
 and it is amazing grace I was not struck down to
 eternal death and darkness! What a wonderful
 mercy that I am here this day to tell you my

case! — The entrance of this sin upon me was by little and little, and it was always my intention to go but a *little further*. I first began to be general and cold in prayer, and had very little heart for it at all; then to withdraw my affections from the godly, and especially the most *serious*, and to take pleasure in the *drier* sort, and other vain persons, so long as they would but refrain from bold and open blasphemy. And I must say, that the company of a *brother* present, hath been a snare to me: Not that I have any thing to charge brother *Cadarn* with, for I never saw him *drunk* in my life; yet, somehow or other, through my fault, his company hath been ensnaring. But alas! I had my snares within myself; and as I gave way to them they grew upon me, till they led me captive, as a prey in the hands of the mighty. In tender love you endeavoured my recovery, for which I bless God and thank you; but my heart was shut up against God and you, (notwithstanding my dry confession of my sin) which you perceived; and therefore, as a church of Christ, you admonished me. The admonition, and the private endeavours of brethren, were so blest for my recovery, that they produced in me a great change: But I, like a fool, trusted my own heart, was vastly pleased with myself, and the conquest over my corruption; which was no sooner done than carelessness entered my heart, and I returned *like the dog to his vomit*. Then shame, guilt, and a hardness possessed me, which warded off all impressions of law and gospel. Upon your *second* admonition, I was filled with something of so disagreeable a nature, that my flesh trembles

trembles to think of it. Displeased with God and the church, displeased with myself, and displeased with all the world; uneasy and restless, and how to come at ease I could not tell! I never thought then of Christ's easy yoke, nor the rest of soul enjoyed under it; but was dreadfully resolved to get myself drunk, and keep myself so; and thus to forget every burden. And as I was going to put this horrid resolution in practice, (Oh dreadful precipice, that Satan and my own corruption had led me to!) just then, I say, God sent a brother of the church to keep me back. He talked to me of the lost sheep, and the prodigal; he prayed over my bonds, and, with many tears, intreated the Redeemer, who came to preach liberty to the captives, to set me free: Then I felt my cords untied, found love to Christ and his church reviving, and began to be filled with hatred to sin, loathing myself. — The particulars many of you have heard; and blessed be the Lord that I can now add, *Come all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.* He hath delivered my soul from death; Oh may he also keep my feet from falling! I am under wounds, bruises, and broken bones, but am encouraged to hope, That the Redeemer forgiveth all mine iniquities, and healeth all my diseases. Under a sense of the greatest unworthiness, I cast myself at his feet, and at yours as a church of his. Oh, among the children, among the children! — *For tears he could speak no more.*

Neophytus. What a difference between this and his former acknowledgments! Certainly this pleased all the church.

Epenetus. The whole church heard him with many tears; and it was some time before the Elders themselves could speak one word; at last, says

Derbi. "My dear brethren, you have heard this account of the restoring grace of God, and the present frame of soul with which our brother delivered it; if you are, as a church of Christ, satisfied therewith and testify your love to him, willing to admit him into your most intimate fellowship in the Lord; signify it by lifting up your hands: — *Which they unanimously did.* — And he, poor heart! bowed his head and wept: — Then thanked them all for their love, and begged their prayers. — Then *Yefan* gave a short but sweet discourse from those words, *He restoreth my soul.*" (*Psa.* xxiii. 3.) After prayer (with abundant thanksgivings) the twenty third Psalm was sung; and so their mourning, in this particular, ended. They sowed in tears, and reaped in joy.

Neophytus. To hear that the affair ended so well, renders the account pleasant and reviving. I was afraid they must have certainly cut him off; but God can heal backslidings.

Epenetus. Indeed many of them expected nothing else, and therefore were the more agreeably surprized and affected. Great was the glory of that work, for by these means God fixed in him such an aversion to drunkenness, that he abhorred all the ways leading to it ever after; and was of great use to the church as long as he lived.

Christophilus.

Christophilus. This was very precious. Oh, when shall any out of the dark drinking tribes be raised up for service among their fellows!

Theophilus. Something was said about one *Cadarn*, who was a snare to his brother; and though that was not directly an information lodged against him, yet it is likely the faithful *Elders*, in those primitive times, would not let it drop, and lie as a stumbling block in the church, without a publick consideration of it.

Epenetus. That man was a person of considerable sense and a strong constitution; was very good-tempered, and his company entertaining, facetious, and pleasant; which was therefore coveted by many; and I may add, seldom denied. He could drink hard without appearing in the least concerned. However, being a church-member, he in the main appeared religious. He had been often talked to by the *Elders*, upon *some* things the lawfulness of which they questioned, and upon *many* things which appeared not *expedient*; but he was of such a happy temper, and amiable accomplishments, that he received every thing in the kindest and most affable manner. This occasion offering itself to take some notice of him in a publick way, *Dewi* spoke to *Meddwyn* as follows:

“DEAR brother, in relating the several ways
“whereby your temptations gradually prevailed
“upon you, you observed, That the company of
“brother *Cadarn*, here present, was in some sense
“a snare to you. Will you favour us with a
“more particular account of that?”

Meddwyn.

Meddwyn. I have little reason to accuse any body, and am sorry I mentioned it: I myself was my own tempter: But seeing I must speak; — The agreeableness of his company, as my mind then stood, was very pleasing to me, and his example taught and encouraged me to drink; but, as I before observed, I know not the man that saw him drunk.

Dewi. “ Brother *Cadarn*, if any poor brother of this church had said of you, That when under temptations your company and exemplary conduct were useful for restoring his soul; I hope it would have been much more agreeable to you than such a story as this. How can you hear it, and not mourn in the dust before the Lord? Did you not sin? Did you not encourage the sins of others? You are desired to speak.”

Cadarn. Sir, I aim at publick usefulness; nor would I desire to live a day longer than I may be profitable to others. I consider, in every company, what may be most useful for conversation, at that time and place: And as for drinking to excess, the brother who spoke justified me; at least he owned he could not accuse me; nor am I conscious to myself of exceeding, or averse to appeal to all the world.

Dewi. “ Then give me leave, brother, to ask you, Whether at any time you drink more than nature requires, and religion justifies?”

Cadarn. Sir, I never drink to drunkenness, but keep within the perfect use of reason, sense, and limb; nor could any person in the world say of me, *There goes a drunkard.*

Dewi.

Dewi. " We read that *Benhadad*, king of *Syria*,
 " was drinking himself *drunk* in his pavilions,
 " yet had the use of reason, sense, and limb;
 " mounted a horse, and made his escape from the
 " conquering tribes. (*1 Kings* xx. 16, 20.) Nor
 " are they, God himself being judge, a happy
 " people, that are mighty to drink wine, and men
 " of strength to mingle strong drink. And though
 " perhaps it hath not been said of you, There goes
 " a *drunkard*, yet it is known of whom it hath
 " been said; There goes a person who often drinks
 " as much as will make *two* or *three* men drunk,
 " yet stands up under and carries off all, clean
 " and unconcerned."

Cadarn. Perhaps I am not so great a drinker
 as some would make me, and my staying out some-
 what long in publick places upon business, may
 make them think I drink more than I do. While
 others drink to excess, I am always upon my
 guard.

Dewi. " To tarry long at the wine, stands con-
 " demned in God's word; and that business which
 " requires it, is either unlawful in itself, or fin-
 " fully managed. If the *former*, reject it; if the
 " *latter*, reform it."

Cadarn. Sure, it is lawful in a moderate way
 to pursue the business of life, and provide for our
 families; and very often if I had not staid so long
 and late as I did, I should have missed of what
 turned to my considerable advantage.

Dewi. " But a little gotten in the way of right-
 " eousness, hath a glory upon it; while great
 " revenues, obtained out of the path of duty, stand

“ under a dark and dreadful cloud. Besides, how
“ can you tell but providence might have been
“ more liberal to you, while attending to your special
“ duty towards Him whose blessing alone maketh
“ rich? However, it would have been better for
“ your body and soul, and more agreeable to your
“ family.”

Cadarn. I never knew that my family suffered through my conduct; nor do I apprehend myself worse in soul or body, from any freedom I use in my way of living.

Dewi. “ If you do not worship God with your
“ family before they go to bed, or even before it
“ is very late, they must be sufferers: And so they
“ must be, when at a seasonable time, if you are
“ full of liquor; though not what persons may call
“ *drunk*. In such a case they must be poor, dry,
“ distant performances, that can neither be pleasing
“ to God, profitable to your family, nor hardly
“ sufficient to quiet your conscience. Say what you
“ can, such a practice must raise a wall between
“ you and the Chief Good. Your soul must be the
“ leaner for it, as it is incompatible with a state
“ of intimate fellowship and refreshing communion
“ with God.”

Cadarn. As I said before, so I say again, I aim at *usefulness*; and hope never to be hurtful to myself or others.

Dewi. “ Hurtful to yourself and family you undoubtedly are, whether you are sensible of it or not. Do not you think that you give your children a bad example? You say, That you aim at usefulness; and I ask, Are you not deceived by
“ your

“ your own heart? Are you not imposed upon by
“ the deceitfulness of sin? Or, can you reasonably
“ expect to be useful out of God’s way?”

Cadarn. Sir, I have stopped the mouths of many;
and in companies where I am known, they dare not
blaspheme our Redeemer. Many of them, further,
have entertained favorable thoughts of our religion,
and are convinced, that we are not such a narrow-
souled, *severe society*, as they had been informed;
and they have often said, they had a mind to come
and hear christianity preached. And, moreover,
being upon my guard against drunkenness, I am
the more capable of reasoning with them, when,
perhaps, many of them are not very capable of
resisting my arguments.

Dewi. “ Here, by your own confession, you may
“ see the hurt you do. They had been informed
“ that we were strict in our morals, and bent against
“ all appearance of evil; but you convince them
“ we are not such a people; and so they begin to
“ have *favourable* thoughts of us! Pray, brother, is
“ this doing them good?—And what though you
“ are not drunk; pray, what does our Lord say
“ of them, who eat and drink *with* the drunken?
“ And, sure, if something had not impaired your
“ own reason, you would never consider *that* as a
“ fit time to dispute with any, when they were
“ confessedly incapable of receiving your arguments.
“ To borrow the prophet’s expression, I must say,
“ *You are as one of them.* You harden them, and
“ grieve the godly.”

Cadarn. But I have several of the godly sometimes in company with me; and am more pleased with theirs than any other.

Dewi. "You, godly souls, observe it and beware! "They, *Cadarn*, by being there, harden you; and "either you grieve or harden them."

Cadarn. Sir, from what you have said, for which I sincerely thank you, I begin to consider, That much hurt may attend a course of moderate drinking, when evident tokens of drunkenness appear not.

Yefan. "Brother, I am glad to hear you say "so. *Hurt!* No tongue can express how much "hurt! *One* healthful person shall needlessly and "wantonly destroy as much as might comfortably "refresh *ten*, who, with heavy hearts and ready to "perish, have nothing to relieve and support them. "That drinking which is not to the glory of God, "which wastes precious time, hinders meditation, "promotes babbling, or impertinent talk, inflames "the blood, and indisposes for serious devotion, is "sinful drinking. Again: That drinking which "prevents seasonable and spiritual family worship, "or fervent closet supplications before God; that "gives to others a wrong idea of the strictness and "holiness of the christian religion, as if it allowed "or connived at, an abuse of the mercies of the "God of heaven; must be dangerous and sinful. "In short: That drinking which conforms the professors of christianity to the world, and confirms "the world in its vain and sinful courses, is downright rebellion against God, and directly opposite "to the great designs of the gospel; though at the
" same

“ same time, such persons may keep themselves from
“ being *drunk* all their days. — Therefore I do, in
“ the name of Christ, and as an Elder in this church,
“ call upon you, brother *Cadarn*, for ever to abstain
“ from, and abhor, all unnecessary drinking and
“ hurtful companies.”

Cadarn. My honoured Pastor and Teacher, I
thankfully acknowledge your faithfulness to Christ
and to me; and am glad this reproof was so pub-
lick, for the benefit of others, who, perhaps, were
grieved and hurt by my conduct.

UPON this, their requests were made known to
God, with abundant thanksgivings, and the meeting
was concluded.

Neophytus. A precious meeting! Here God bore
testimony to the word of his grace, his institutions
and appointments. The glory of the Lord was among
them, and his fear before their eyes.

Christophilus. When with former glory I compare
the present posture of things, in some christian
churches, my heart sinks within me. Where drink-
ing fellows despise and dare the discipline of the
churches; and, with atheistic hearts and disdainful
looks, say to the Elders, *Cut me off, cut me off*.
And when they are cut off, they follow their old
ways without reformation or concern; stiffly maintain
some invisible privileges, and glory, That they *know*
the gospel when they hear it. Then with looks brave
and big, with sneers and scoffs, they rave against
all churches as abounding with *priest-craft*: And if
any of their fellows are restrained, by stings of con-
science, from the same pitch of confidence with
themselves; they are laughed at, and despised, as
feeble,

feeble, foolish and weak. Yea, many of the wretches make a *tender conscience* their sport. "But God" will come to execute judgment upon them, for "all their ungodly deeds, and all their hard speeches, which they have spoken against him." You may easily know them, for, "They walk after their own" lusts, and their mouth speaketh great swelling "words." (o)

Epenetus. *Cadarn* immediately reformed, and never fell into such a course any more; but religiously abstained from all occasions leading thereto: And, reaping in his own soul the great advantage of a close walk with God and his people, that day twelve-month, being a church-meeting day, he stands up, and desires of the Elders leave to speak before the church something that was upon his mind. And, leave being given, he spoke as follows:

Cadarn. "Honoured and beloved in the Lord; you may remember, most of you, how I was reasoned with and reproved, about a year ago, in the church. I stand here now to bless God for that day's reproof and instruction. I have been enabled to abstain from my sin (as I now call it) and mercifully enjoy the precious effects of a different course. The Lord, in mercy, hath restored my soul; this I happily know; my family knows it; and I thought it my duty to let you know it, as a church. Were it put to my choice, methinks I would not for all *Caerludd* forego my present comforts, and fall into my former way. May free grace preserve me; and for ever deliver

deliver me from trusting in an arm of flesh! I bless
“ God for *church membership*; I bless God for the
“ *Elders* who reproved me, and for the precious
“ advantages of that reproof, through the divine
“ blessing, to my soul; and now I earnestly desire
“ a share in your prayers.”

Neophytus. A refreshing story this! May we always hear stories of the conquering grace of God! I hope, dear *Epenetus*, you are ready furnished to give us some more of them.

Epenetus. My dear friends and neighbours, our duties to God and our families demand our attention; and may we, in our evening attendance on our heavenly father, enjoy much of his presence.

DIALOGUE,

DIALOGUE VIII.

The church membership of children; who are not only the care of their parents, but of the church and its officers; to be instructed, &c. as the case may require. This exemplified in the account of Cyndyn, the Son of Gobeithiol. His aversion to holy duties. He is privately reproved by the Elders; not reclaimed; publickly admonished; also a second time; continues obstinate, and is cut off. He leaves his parents; wanders about in great distress; but is at length converted. His parents hear of it. Messengers are sent for him. He relates to the church his experience; whereby another rebellious son is converted. They are both joyfully received by the church.

THEOPHILUS.

HERE is *Neophytus* hastening through the grove, still eager to hear the interesting story. — So, *Neophytus*; I hope you bring us good tidings: Your countenance discovers cheerfulness: Come, what is the best news?

Neophytus. The gospel, the gospel, *Theophilus*, is the best news for ever, But what gave cheerfulness

to my countenance, if any appears there, was the consideration of that innocent mirth which universal nature at this time discovers.

Theophilus. But we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain until now.

Neophytus. Ay, ay; it is true, there is nothing we have ever seen that comes up to the glory and beauty of *Paradise*: But there is a promise, That the wilderness shall become as *Eden*, and our desert as the *Garden of the Lord*. In the mean while, though groans and death must attend every thing temporal, however beautiful and pleasant, there is a time to rejoice.—*Theophilus*, had you been with me this day in my walks, you would have said, That God had made *Tabor* and *Hermon* to rejoice, and the little hills on every side. Oh! it refreshed me to see our pastures clothed with flocks, and our valleys covered over with corn. God made me glad through his work; and the singing of birds around strongly induced me to join the *chorus*: And because *they* could not praise God with *design*, I thought they bid *me* do it for them.*

Theophilus.

* *Beasts* fain would sing; *birds* ditty to their notes;

Trees would be tuning on their native lute,

To *THEY* renown: But all their hands and throats

Are brought to *man*; while they are lame and mute.

Man is the world's *Highb-Priest*; he doth present

The sacrifice for all; while they below

Unto the service mutter an assent,

Such as springs use that fall, and winds that blow.

Ho.

Theophilus. Indeed did we but duly observe the wonders of *providence*, not to mention those of *redeeming love*, which are infinitely above all blessing and praise; we should be constantly constrained to give thanks and sing.*

Christophilus.

He that to praise and laud ~~THEE~~ doth refrain,
Doth not refrain unto himself alone;
But robs a thousand, who would praise thee fain;
And doth commit a world of sin in one.

HERBERT.

* "God made the whole world for man, and man for *Himself*; that by him nature, otherwise dumb and stupid, might become in a manner eloquent and grateful towards its Creator; and that man, placed in the midst of the creatures, who were all designed for his use and service, might lend them his voice, his understanding and admiration, and be in a manner the *priest* of all nature. How many benefits has it pleased God to confer upon man? Not content with providing for his necessities, his care and tenderness have supplied him with what ministers to pleasure and delight. — There is no part of nature which does not pay a tribute to man, that man in his turn may pay the author of all these benefits the due homage of gratitude and praise, — the most essential duty of the creature. Nor must ingratitude be allowed to say, That it is *nature* supplies us with all these blessings; unless by this word, which has usually no distinct idea affixed to it, we are to understand only the *DIVINITY* himself, who moves every thing, produces every thing, and makes himself known to us every moment by his benefits and bounty. — If man had any sense of honour and gratitude, all that he sees in nature, all that he experiences in himself, would be to him a continual subject of gratitude, praise and thanksgiving. The herb of the field, which supplies the animals with milk for his nourishment, the wool of these animals, which furnishes him with clothes, ought to fill him with admiration. When he sees the clouds

" of

Christophilus. Especially when we reflect; That with the Lord there is *mercy*; that he *delighteth* therein; and that all his paths towards them, who put their trust in him, are mercy and truth.

Philaethes.

"of earth crushed and broken to pieces by the plough-share, and
 "a long ridge thrown up for the reception of the seed, he ought
 "to cry out, How great is God! How good, in having procured
 "for us all the instruments proper for tillage! When he sits down
 "to table to eat, every thing should recall God to his mind, and
 "renew his gratitude. 'Tis He (he should say) who has given
 "me hands to take up my food, teeth to break and grind it,
 "a stomach to digest it; and, what is the subject of praises,
 "which more nearly concern me, it is He, who, to all the be-
 "nefits he confers upon me, adds, besides, the inestimable ad-
 "vantage of knowing the author of them, and making such use
 "of them as is conformable to his will. As all mankind are
 "plunged into a *deep lethargy* concerning Providence, is it not
 "just that some, in the name of all the rest, should publicly
 "sing hymns and songs to its honour?" (ROLLIN's *Method of*
Study, Vol. iv. Book v. Artic. 1.)

WERE men in general but attentive to these sentiments, what
 abounding evils, particularly, what sinful *waste*, and extravagant
luxury, might be prevented in the world; and how happy for our
 nation in particular, where these vices reign with almost unbounded
 sway; since they are evidently produced and fostered by their ab-
 horred parent *ingratitude*! — But if the above quoted reflections be
 the language of *philosophy*, of *pagan* philosophy; if those be the
 sentiments of *Cicero*, *Seneca*, and *Epictetus*, "Who were without
 "Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of *Israel*, and
 "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and
 "without God in the world;" what tolerable plea can be of-
 fered, what possible excuse can be formed, to exculpate, or even
 to extenuate, the abounding ingratitude of professing *Christians*;
 who are so highly favoured with privileges unknown to heathens,
 and numberless incentives to grateful praise? — Still more astonish-
 ing is it (though not uncommon) to find a *discontented*, *murmur-*

Philalethes. A blessed subject, for those who have made themselves miserable, to meditate upon: His mercy is in the heavens; yea, *above* the heavens; and of his mercy we should sing aloud.

Neophytus. And with pleasure I observe, That the *earth* also is full of his mercy. Who can lay open the multitude of his tender mercies? Oh! my heart is refreshed with that divine declaration, *The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

Syllogisticus. When I consider the wise and tender providence of God towards every living thing; — the *provision* He makes for the innumerable tribes of the several elements, and the *pleasure* they enjoy according to their various capacities and dispositions; — my

ing, unthankful disposition in real christians; who, superadded to what others enjoy, are savingly taught to know the Father of their mercies; are peculiarly interested in, and ineffably yet really united to, the Son of God, and made (wonderful indeed!) living temples of the Holy Spirit! Who, moreover, are loved with an everlasting love; redeemed by the precious blood of Christ; called with an holy calling; justified and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God; preserved by omnipotent power, in the way of holiness and peace here, and destined for endless, never-fading glory hereafter! — Christian reader, art thou unthankful towards the Eternal Source of all, in possession of these and innumerable other mercies and covenant-blessings, which are as infallibly secured as they are freely bestowed; and which, when even unperceived, incessantly flow for thy support and comfort? — Blush at the very thought. — Imitate rather the delightful practice of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, who summoned all his powers to celebrate the deserved praises of JEHOVAH: Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. (Psalm ciii, 1, 2.)

—my heart is thankful on their behalf. Every thing attending them is beautiful, except what our sins have procured. — But there is one gift of the God of nature granted to most if not to all of them, that I have been often greatly affected with; and that is their (*Σροπν*) *natural affection*, tenderness and care for their young. A *sheep*, to defend its lamb, will threaten a *mastiff*; and a timorous *hen* will, in defence of her young, fly at an *eagle*. I have thought, what a merciful provision this, for the safety of the feeble, that cannot help themselves! And with pleasure I have at times indulged a contemplation of the infinite compassions that dwell in the *eternal Spring* of life.

Theophilus. Your following the several streams of pity and affection in animal life, up to the fountain from whence they flow, is certainly a just and rational process. For what, in the whole kingdom of providence, is a greater demonstration of the divine pity and goodness, than the affections of tender parents to their offspring?

Christophilus. In several passages of scripture God condescends to express his special love and pity to his people, by that natural affection tender parents feel and discover: And since God hath graciously given me children, I understand them in another manner than before. The *pains* I have felt in the afflictions of my child, and the very sensible *pleasure* I have enjoyed in its relief and prosperity; the earnest desires after all happiness for this life and the next; and the careful attendance without weariness to the use of all means for its good; have been to me the most instructive *commentaries*. Oh, the
grace

grace and love of God in such kind expressions as these! *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you. A mother may forget her sucking child, yet will I not forget thee.* Many more scriptures of a like kind are very precious to me: For I think with myself, If my love to my child, who am but a poor sinful parent, hath so many ways of discovering itself; what must the love, and bowels of compassion, of my heavenly Father be to his children!—And as to my little ones, the Lord seems to say to me concerning each, as the *Egyptian* princess said to *Moses's* mother, “Take this child and nurse it for me:” And with joy I apply myself to the work.

Philalethes. How did the Lord approve of that care in *Abraham*! “For I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.”—And how did he recommend it unto the *Tribes*! “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children; and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” (p)

Philologus. And how encouraging to godly parents is that special notice the Apostle *John* takes of little children! “I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you
“for

“ for his name sake, — I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.”

(b) — Though in our translation, as I have repeated the words, we have *little children* twice; yet in the *original* the Apostle makes a difference.

“ I write to you (*παιδια*) my dear *little ones*, in your tender *infancy*, because your sins are forgiven you for his name sake. I write to you “ (*παιδια*) my dear *little youths*, who, though young “ in years, have received some instructions and “ known the Father.” Christ, the prince of shepherds, gathers his *lambs* with his arms, and carries them in his bosom. When he gave his Apostles charge to feed his *sheep*, he expressly charged them to feed his *lambs* also. And here we see the beloved disciple, in a very faithful manner, discharging his trust. — Let affectionate pious parents for ever admire the grace of God! And let them be encouraged to bring up their little ones in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*; (c) that they may in tender youth know the Father.

Syllogisticus. Amazing grace indeed! And from what you mentioned last upon *nurture and admonition*, I must observe, that the kindness of God to our children abundantly appears in the *commands* he lays upon us, to bring them up in the *way of the Lord*; or, as the holy Spirit elsewhere expresses it; *To train them up in the way they should go*. (d) Surely the many repeated precepts of God concerning their education, with strict charge not

(b) 1 *John*, ii. 12, 13. (c) *Eph*, vi. 4. (d) *Prov*. xxii. 6.

not to take those measures that tend to discourage them, are plain demonstrations of his tender regard to them; and they are unspeakable encouragements to us concerning them.

Neophytus. Our Lord tells us in the plainest terms, concerning little children, *That the kingdom of heaven is theirs*; — which must imply, either church-membership in the kingdom of Christ upon earth; or (dying such) the kingdom of glory above. And, therefore, parents are under the greatest obligations to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. For what did our Lord mean, when, after his resurrection, he left it in charge with his disciples, *to feed his lambs*?

Epenetus. Christ by *feeding his lambs* meant, — that tender godly care and love towards all the children of the church, that manifests itself by a sincere and faithful discharge of all those duties, which the scriptures require, and particular circumstances render necessary. — What did our Lord intend by feeding his *sheep*? The very same he must mean by feeding his *lambs*; namely, a faithful distribution of their respective portions to each in due season. — The children of the church are not only the care of their parents, but also of the church and its officers; to be instructed, encouraged or reproved, in a private or publick way, as the case may require. And though at present duties of this kind are much neglected, yet from the beginning it was not so. *

Neophytus.

* ON the subject of infants' right to baptism, something hath been said before; (See Dial. ii, page 66, *Note*) also on their consequent

Naophytus. I hope therefore, *Epenetus*, you will favour us with one or two instances, to exemplify this important part of church-discipline.

Epenetus. You may remember that not long since I mentioned a visit of one of the Bishops of the first church in *Caerludd*, to one *Gabeithiol*, and

P

Mwynedd

sequent right to church-membership. (*Dial. ii. page 78, Note.*) But our Author, in this part of the original work, takes considerable pains to maintain a favourite point, which I shall venture to pronounce a very *precarious hypothesis*. It is that of *hereditary grace*; if I may so express the notion, that all the children of the godly are *absolutely* interested in all new-covenant blessings. This sentiment has been slightly touched upon in several of the preceding Dialogues, and I have before had occasion to observe, that it is liable to many *weighty objections*. (*Page 68, Note.*)—Let us now advert to his principal evidence, and briefly examine, how well it is calculated to support this extraordinary conclusion. His main argument is this; If we be Christ's (or true believers) then are we *Abraham's* seed, and heirs according to the promise; (*Gal. iii. 29.*) But the promise to *Abraham* was, That *Jehovah* would be his God, and the God of his seed: (*Gen. xvii. 7.*) Therefore, every believing gentile is an heir according to *that* promise, and, consequently, hath as indubitable a right to its full contents as the Patriarch and his seed ever had. This is the *evidence*. The blessings, therefore, of that ancient promise he indiscriminately appropriates to all the children of the godly, notwithstanding the most unpromising appearances, continuing to their latest breath. Hence we are urged, as believers, to flee to this divine promise, as *absolute*; to plead it boldly and without reserve; concluding, that the Lord will not be displeased with the freedom, because he said to *Abraham*, and, by consequence, to every believing parent till time shall be no more, I WILL BE THY GOD, AND THE GOD OF THY SEED. These are his *inferences*.

BUT are we justly authorized to apply a divine promise, or interpret a divine declaration, by any other rule than the *most evident*

Mwynedd his wife; both of them very eminent Christians, but under great distress of mind, on account of a stubborn son of theirs, whose name was Cyndyn: * I shall now proceed, in compliance with our friend *Neophytus's* request, and as it will subserve our main design, to give you the particulars of that youth's history.

WHEN

* See Dial. v. page 206.

evident intention of the holy Spirit; and can this be better ascertained than by carefully attending to that sense of the passage in question, which *most unexceptionably harmonizes* with the whole of revelation and the analogy of faith? But that interpretation of the *Abrahamic* promise, which *Mr. Morrice* and some others have adopted, and which considers the words in their literal, absolute and undistinguished application, is replete with very absurd consequences. Jehovah, surely, was not the God of *Abraham* and of his unbelieving natural descendants, in the same respects! Or was the immediate offspring of a pious *Hebrew* intitled to the fulness of the parents blessing? So far from it, that we have not the least evidence from the sacred oracles of any child among the thousands of *Israel*, who was intitled to the *righteousness of faith* in virtue of the parents' piety. Nor is there sufficient evidence, that *circumcision*, which the apostle terms *a Seal of the righteousness of faith*, was ever administered to the *Jewish* infants, but as they had a retrospect relation to the renowned patriarchs, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*. If so, by what fair pretence can a pious *Christian*, more than a pious *Jew*, turn claimant with God, in behalf of his children, for the blessings of righteousness and eternal life? Do not thousands of the most affectionate parents experience to their inexpressible grief, that their children, at least some of them, when grown up to think and act for themselves, are prone, if not equally prone, to vice, with the rest of their neighbours; and continue to their dying day proof against every pious effort to their reformation? Though, blessed be God! we have numerous instances to wit-

ness

WHEN Cyndyn was yet but a young child, there appeared on him some uncommon tokens of perverseness; though the parents always hoped they were only such as would quickly vanish before the power of christian education and growing reason. There were, however, some things in him which,

P 2

for

ness to the powerful efficacy of a *sanctified* education. But in effecting this, God is to be regarded as *blessing appointed means*, rather than *accomplishing covenant engagements* made to the parents.

To conceive accurately of the *Abrahamic* covenant, it is necessary to consider it under a *threefold* aspect; both as it relates to the believing Patriarch *himself*, and his covenanted *seed*. *I will be thy God*. Visited by *sovereign grace*, he becomes an eminent believer; and, then, in virtue of a *free promise*, he receives the *additional* honour of being the *father* of a *seed* in *three* respects. *First*, he was constituted a conspicuous pattern, or bright *exemplar*, for all that should believe through grace, whether Jews or Gentiles; *secondly*, the honoured *progenitor* of the Lord *Messiah*; *thirdly*, the distinguished *parent* of a peculiar people. But the two last aspects are closely connected; as the latter was altogether in subordination to the former. Jehovah became *Abraham's* God in the fullest, and most glorious sense of the phrase; — his *exceeding great reward*, and his *all-sufficient portion*, — by *sovereign electing love* in the adorable Immanuel; through the *faith* of the *operation* of God, apprehending the *common salvation*. Whatever honorary titles, or valuable privileges, were conferred upon him, as an addition to the glorious blessing; the *exemplar* of all the faithful, the *progenitor* of the Messiah, the *parent* of the *Jewish* nation; these, *all* these accumulated honours, evidenced the Lord to be *Abraham's* God in a *secondary* view only. — The same *threefold* distinction should be observed respecting the other part of the promise, — *I will be the God of thy seed*. *Abraham's* *seed*, under the *first* aspect, intends all the heirs of grace, who receive righteousness and life after his example; “ who are born,

“ not

for his years gave uncommon discoveries of wit, contrivance and design: And though ever appearing in some selfish or mischievous instances, the parents still expected that such parts would in time be overruled and fitted for some uncommon service. Accordingly he had in their affections what might be called, an extraordinary degree of fondness.

But

“not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (*John* i. 13.) Under the *second* aspect, the term *seed* evidently means the Lord Christ; to which acceptance the inspired reasoner alludes (*Gal.* iii. 16.) where he dissuades the *Jews* from confiding in an external relation to their celebrated ancestor, directing their views to the divine redeemer. “Now to *Abraham* and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds as of many; but, as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.” Under the *third* aspect, the word *seed* must imply the *posterity* of *Abraham* in the line of *Isaac* and *Jacob*; who were distinguished from other nations by the painful rite of circumcision, in conjunction with other observances and peculiarities; and thereby served as an honoured *vehicle*, ceremonially consecrated, to usher in Messiah the Prince, in the fulness of time, upon the theatre of the world. In him all the families of the earth, who are the objects of redeeming love, are eternally blessed. By his incarnation and atonement all *carpal connections* were dissolved. When He, the most Holy, was anointed to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness, the *second* and *third* aspects of the promise were *fulfilled*. So fulfilled, that no mortal could ever after consistently plead them for himself or his seed. — If we consider *Christ*, in reference to these distinctions, we may observe, that as to the *first*, he is the grand *medium* through whom grace flows to the elect; as to the *second*, he is the substance and glorious centre from whom all spiritual blessings are diffused through the whole universality of the *one* church; and as to the *third*, he

BUT as he grew up, the disagreeable tokens of a perverse nature grew faster than he did. He discovered particularly a sad aversion to prayer: Never was willing to get up in a morning, till the worship of God in the family was over; and at night, either he was asleep, or there must be one to keep him awake, or he had the head-ach, and must go to bed. In the publick worship he would be staring about him for his diversion, or at some foolish, trifling play with hands, fingers or feet; or perhaps asleep: And upon examination, when he came home, what he remembered? (for his parents always charged him to observe what he heard, and to bring with him home as much as he could)

P 3

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he was the ultimate *end*, to whom all preparatory dispensations and peculiar rites, referred. — These considerations, I presume, are sufficient to evince, that *new* testament saints have nothing more to do with the *Abrahamic* covenant, than the *old* testament believers who lived *prior* to *Abraham*; nor in a sense so much: For *Adam*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, &c. were not only interested in the blessings of grace and glory; but were, moreover, the *progenitors* of *Christ* by promise; only in a manner less explicit. What we, then, have to claim, or possibly can claim, in the nature of things, relative to the much talked of promise, for ourselves or children, must not be *justification* and eternal life as of absolute right; but, having reason to conclude from *other* premises, that ourselves or our children are in a *justified state*, we may in full assurance plead all the blessings and gospel privileges connected with justification. It is lawful, doubtless; it is praiseworthy, to repose the most unbounded confidence in the divine promises, when we are furnished with proper evidence, that they were intended for our use; but without such evidence, our confidence degenerates into presumption, — a presumption which, the stronger it is, becomes the more dangerous,

he would either say, That his head did ach, or that something fell out by the way which made him *forget* what he *did remember*; or that he remembered *something* he was sure, only he could not say the *very words* of it. Reading he always abhorred, and it was a torment to him to hear others read; and though his parents always told him of his natural state and the only way of salvation, and how by prayer night and morning he should cry to God; and even should never partake of his food without thankful thoughts sent up to God, and words of prayer for a blessing; yet prayer he detested, and he always fell to his food like a swine.

THE means of instruction the parents used were many; they catechised him, they made him learn some portions of scripture by heart, they would over and over tell him the meaning of them, they would reason with him, reprove him, pray with him, chastise him, call others to reason with him, especially the *Elders* and *Edgar*: Which from time to time, they faithfully did; and now and then would seemingly fasten conviction upon him, and obtain some promises; but all to very little purpose. — However, any little thing the poor parents were very glad of. They kept in their duty towards him, always earnestly desiring and eagerly expecting to see some good fruit to follow; and to their great joy a sudden reformation commenced, and a great change appeared upon him; he would read, would constantly join in family-worship, would talk about religion, keep company with religious youths; would pray with them and would pray

pray alone: ——— Now were his parents pleased, now they wept for joy! —

BUT after a little while their tears took another turn, and their trial became almost intolerable: I told you there appeared a change *upon* him, and now it appeared there was no change *in* him. He threw away that external religion he took up, left off reading, was weary of family-worship, forsook the company of religious youths, and would pray no more. His former prayers were generally loud, but now that noise was laid. His parents could hardly get him to the publick worship; he was driven to it as a slave, and behaved in it like a stupid obstinate sinner. He chose the worst of company, conformed to their ways, and in many things quickly became their chief. Now prayers, tears, reproofs, chastisements, threatnings and promises were all to no purpose; he hated instruction, and was in love with all the ways of death.

ONE time, being out on his wicked rambles, and found in the ways of sin, he was brought home; and his father, being able enough to deal with him, sent up a sigh to heaven, and gave him a severe chastisement, and cried sorely as he did it; for being a tender father, he *felt* the blows himself; they went more to *his* heart than they did to his son's. However, the young man went immediately to bed, and the father into his closet to pour out his soul before God; and the poor tender mother also retired to mourn and pray alone.— The father was afraid he had chastised too rashly and severely; that he had not only hurt his child's body, but hardened his heart, making him think

hardly of religion. The mother was not without such thoughts. They each of them mourned apart under this; and when they met, they could not speak to one another for some time. At last says

Mwynedd, My dear, what have you done? Will he not think christianity cruel? Have you not given him what he must carry with him to his grave? Our child to our grief is very rebellious, but what do you think you have been at?

Gobeithiol. My dear, do not you add to my grief; it is almost greater than I can bear. I have not chastised willingly: I have scourged myself: And though it was my work, it was my strange work: I desire I may never do it more. I am afraid I have exceeded, but I aimed at my duty.

Mwynedd. I would not have you fall under a reproof that was given to a man of God, because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not. I own that you should chastise and do all you can to restrain him, but—excuse me, I am his mother! —

Gobeithiol. And, my dear, I am his father; and unto me the Lord says, *Chasten thy son, while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.* And you know who hath said, *He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him belimes.*

Mwynedd. I have brought forth for trouble: My child, the son of my womb, is the son of my sorrow. — Oh, my child, my dear child, of whom I still travail in birth! Shall I ever see *Christ* formed

med in him!—Pray, my dear, go to the throne of grace for a blessing on this correction—and let me join with you.

UPON this they threw themselves before the Lord ; they prayed, mourned, confessed and humbled themselves under a sense of this sore trial ; and with many tears committed their child to God, begging his blessing upon all. But still that night their son had more rest than they had. Nobody can tell how it is with tender parents, but tender parents themselves !

Christophilus. Dear *Epenetus*, in this story you have touched me to the quick; in hearing this relation, I cannot help putting myself into the place of those parents; and I wonder how they did to live! The pains of such parents no words can express. — But how did they find it with their son the following day?

Epenetus. Poor hearts! As far as prudence would permit, they discovered all tenderness to him; and though they did not *tell* him so, were glad and thankful to see him so well. He was present at family-worship, when his father, with great enlargement and affection, sent up strong cries, with many tears, on his behalf; declared and pitied his condition, and pleaded the rich and glorious grace of God to the chief of sinners. — The poor mother was very glad to observe the Lord so opening her husband's heart; but much grieved to observe all the while her son's heart shut up; for nothing could she discover but a sullen uneasy countenance.

Neophytus. Sure upon that young man there
P 5 seemed

seemed to be marks of reprobation; his case was desperate.

Theophilus. This is rash, *Neophytus*: The marks of reprobation are not known to us; nor can any man living tell, whose case is desperate.—It is well that God's thoughts are higher than our's.—*Epenetus*, excuse us.

Epenetus. His father set him to his proper business which he refused not. His father's countenance discovered the greatest concern, but his words to him were few. His mother took the first opportunity to talk to him, but could get nothing from him much to the purpose. But he kept in for some weeks, and generally attended family-worship, though it appeared to be his burthen; but never regarded his parents as his best friends. So after a while he fell into his bad courses, with more greediness than ever, and boldness in sinning grew upon him.

Theophilus. This must be very trying! What did his poor parents do then?

Epenetus. They prayed for him, reproved him, and reasoned with him, from time to time, and now one of their Elders paid them a visit, and sharply reproved the rebellious youth, and received from him an obstinate answer, which a few weeks ago I gave you the account of.—But quickly after that, all the Elders and a few of the brethren, upon the parents' request, came to spend a day in prayer at *Gobeithiol's* house.

Neophytus. With submission, I earnestly desire some account of that day's work.

Epenetus.

Epenetus. Their principal business being with God, they thought the greatest part of their time should be taken up in prayer. *Yefan* begun, and with an enlarged heart earnestly desired the presence of God, the God of all grace, with them that day; and that it might be a day to be remembered.— After *Yefan*, two Ruling Elders prayed, in the same spirit, and much to the same purpose; and then *Deawi* read (*Eph. vi. 1.*) *Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right;*— and from that text gave that small assembly a very sweet discourse; aiming especially at the support of the parents and conviction of their son. He observed how the holy spirit, in writing to the churches, included the *children*, and often directly speaks to them. He observed, that God directly entrusts parents to teach, instruct and *command* their children in his name. He observed therefore, that it was the special duty of children to *obey* their parents so teaching, instructing and commanding. He observed, that as parents should require nothing but what the Lord requires, so that children in obeying should, in the *first* place, obey the Lord, and then their parents as authorized by him, and commanding in his name. He observed therefore, that it was the special duty both of parents and children to *search* much into the mind of the Lord, and conform themselves thereunto, or else neither the commands of the one, nor the obedience of the other could be said to be *in the Lord*. And *lastly*, he observed, that upon such authority and obedience there is a great deal of beauty and glory; for all *is right*. Upon each of these he insisted, and took up as much time as

he thought convenient; and then in a fervent prayer to God begged the divine blessing thereon, and the divine guidance in what yet did lie before them, as the designed work of that day.

Christophilus. I wish each godly family had a scriptural evangelical discourse upon those observations! — But pray what was there more to be done?

Epenetus. The next thing they judged necessary was, to put some close questions to the young man, and get from him what answers they could; a short account of which, take as follows.

Yefan. I will take leave, *Cyndyn*, to ask you one question, which may open the way to more: Pray whose are you?

Cyndyn. Nobody's that I know of, unless I am my father's.

Yefan. Brother *Gobeithiol*, whose are you?

Gobeithiol. I am the Lord's.

Yefan. I will put the question to you again, *Cyndyn*; whose are you?

Cyndyn. I did not think of what my father said, but if he is the Lord's I am the Lord's; and besides all things are the Lord's.

Yefan. Is your father the Lord's, think you, in no other sense than as all things are?

Cyndyn. Yes; for there are many persons who never gave themselves unto the Lord; and there are many things that cannot; but I have heard my father give himself many a time to the Lord.

Yefan. You say, if you are any body's, you are your father's; and did not you hear him give you to the Lord?

Cyndyn. Yes, I think I have heard him.

Yefan.

Yefan. And do you think, *Cyndyn*, your father did well in this.

Cyndyn. Yes, I believe he did.

Yefan. Then you must think that you are the Lord's in a different sense from many other persons and things.

Cyndyn. Yes, it is like enough I am.

Yefan. Then pray why do not you give what is his own?

Cyndyn. Sir, I keep nothing from him that I know of.

Yefan. He says, *My son, give me thy heart*; you do not give him that.

Cyndyn. Sir, you cannot see what I do with that.

Yefan. That is your mistake; for *the tree is known by its fruit*; and if you gave your heart to the Lord, you would also yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.

Cyndyn. Well, I hope I shall in due time give all to him.

Yefan. Now is the due time; and you have sorely sinned against God, in that you have not yielded up all to him long before now.

Cyndyn. Sure a poor young man may enjoy himself and the innocent pleasures of life a little!

Yefan. Self is Christ's enemy; and in seeking yourself, you do most certainly deceive your own soul, and deprive yourself of the best of pleasures.

Cyndyn. I know of no pleasures better than those I enjoy; if I could but enjoy them quietly; and what I do not know I envy nobody.

Yefan. Enjoy them quietly you cannot; whatever face, brisk and bold, you may put upon it. Conscience

science will alarm. " Rejoice, O young man, in
 " thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the
 " days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy
 " heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know
 " thou, that for all these things God will bring
 " thee into judgment." How will you stand
 in the judgment? for you see you shall be brought
 there.

Cyndyn. I do not think always to live thus; I
 hope in due time to repent and reform.

Yefan. And as I said before, the due time is
 now; and the farther you go in sin, the harder
 you will grow, and the more indisposed to repent.
 The Lord calls you now to repentance, and in his
 name I do so: *Let the wicked forsake his way, and
 the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return
 unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and
 to our God for he will abundantly pardon.*

Cyndyn. That is well; and I hope to find it so.

Yefan. But this hope of your's is a hope that
 maketh ashamed. Your godly parents are ashamed
 of it, we are all ashamed of it, and when it ap-
 pears to you no more than a spider's web, you will
 be ashamed of it too.

Cyndyn. I desire you would be so favourable to
 me as to let me alone, that I may in the way I
 choose, enjoy as much pleasure as I can.

Yefan. To let you alone so long as we can do
 any thing, would be so far from being favourable
 to you, that it would be downright cruelty. We
 know you are miserable, and we know that our
 gracious Saviour calls upon us to shew mercy to
 those in misery, and use all the means we can to
 relieve

relieve them; and we know that you are in a special manner committed to our faithful inspection and tender care, and if we neglect you, we shall be undutiful to our Lord, and barbarous to you.

Cyndyn. I should be very thankful if you would please to let me alone.

Yefan. That time, though a very awful one, for aught I know may be at hand. His condition was dreadful, of whom the Lord says, *He is joined to idols, let him alone.*

Cyndyn. But I want to be so happy.

Yefan. Poor soul! my flesh trembles to hear you, and my heart is greatly distressed to see the tears of your tender parents; and to think that their cries, tears and intreaties should make no impression upon you is very shocking. And still it is more so that the tender mercies of God, the love of Christ, and the blood of the everlasting covenant, should by you be trampled upon and despised.

Cyndyn. And I say again be so kind as to let me alone.

Yefan. You stand as yet in *relation* to the church, and it must, as a church, be acquainted with your obstinacy in the way of sin; and if you come not to the church to testify repentance, they must doubtless judge that you are in the same case with him of old who despised his birth-right.

Cyndyn. They may do what they will, I shall lose nothing by it, that I know of. I should be glad if my parents would give me leave to withdraw. I am sorry you gave yourselves and me this trouble.

Neophytus,

Neophytus. Well, this young man seemed to be such a one as God would have nothing to do with.

Theophilus. You would do well, *Neophytus*, to slack your pace a little.

Epenetus. Upon this *Demetrius* read that text, *My son, if sinners entice thee consent thou not.* And in a sweet tender discourse, with many tears, gave *Cyndyn* the best advice,—and desired him to be at the next church meeting, for they must take his case into consideration. Then encouraged the poor parents; and bid them hope to the end. Then he and the other elders in a very affectionate spiritual manner, mourned and prayed; but the heaviness of heart the parents were under cannot be expressed. So the work of the day concluded, without any appearance of the desired, the much desired fruit.

Christophilus. However, upon the work itself there seemed to be very great beauty. Such love, such care, such tenderness and diligence in the use of means, discovered the sincerity of their souls, and the glory of the christian religion. But I perceive they had not done with him. God's people must make a representation of his patience and long-suffering also; pray how did they go on?

Epenetus. As they had opportunity, they did all they could to pluck him as a brand out of the fire; some would tenderly speak to him when they met him, others could not, but with tears in their eyes would give him such a look of pity, and a sigh, enough to pierce a heart of stone; and they prayed for him; and all desired their children to beware. His parents, you must think, were always at their work; but they could not get him to the

the church meeting, when it came; but away he stole to places and company more agreeable to him.

BUT the day came, and after prayer, and opening some portions of scripture,

Devi said, "Dear brethren, our glorious Shepherd feeds his flock, and gathers his lambs with his arms. His love is wonderful: and among many other great and eminent instances thereof, it shines much in the charge he hath given us to watch over each other in the Lord; and to exhort one another daily; and the charge he hath given us concerning our children, is an evident token of his care for them. Christ bids us feed them, which must include the doctrine of his word and the discipline of his house. That we are found in any measure in our duty towards them, is a mercy to us, is a mercy to them. Many precious fruits of this we have seen. And though trials in the discharge of our duty may attend us, let us not hang the wing and be discouraged, so long as we are but in the way of our duty. There is a trial indeed upon us now; *Cyndyn*, the son of our beloved *Gobeithial*, makes awful advances in the way of sin and obduracy. His sins are known to many of us; a particular account of them is neither necessary nor agreeable. All possible means, in a more *private* way, have been used to reclaim him, but he revolts more and more.—My flesh trembles to think of the wicked expressions which with deliberation proceeded from him at his father's house, when after prayer for him, we were reasoning with him for his good. The God of all grace have mercy on him!

" on

“on his dear grieved parents, and upon us, and
 “guide us in our further duty towards him; and
 “this is what, as a church of Christ, you are de-
 “sired now to consider.”

Yefan. “We should have been very glad if he
 “had been here; perhaps the presence of a pray-
 “ing church, deeply concerned for him, might have
 “made some impressions on his heart: Pray, bro-
 “ther *Gobeithiol*, why is he not here?”

Gobeithiol. Sir, we could by no means prevail
 upon him to come; and he is gone I do not know
 where.

Yefan. “Dear brethren, what our beloved bro-
 “ther *Dewi* delivered concerning *Cyndyn* is not a
 “report that stands in need of confirmation; it is
 “known to all of us.—The case is now before
 “you as a church of *Christ*, and it is evident that
 “your grief is great.—It is now my place to ask
 “and receive your judgment upon the matter; and
 “therefore, if you do as a church of *Christ* think
 “it your duty to admonish *Cyndyn* of his great sin,
 “obstinacy, and disobedience to his parents, de-
 “spising the church of *Christ* and his laws therein,
 “and call him to unfeigned repentance and re-
 “formation, signify it by lifting up your hands:—”

Which they unanimously did.

Yefan. “Having seen and heard so much of his
 “obstinacy, and suspecting he would not be here,
 “we thought it convenient to have an admonition
 “drawn up in writing, which upon your approba-
 “tion and order shall be sent. It is thus:

The

*The Church of Christ unto Cyndyn-ap-Gobeithiol,
yet under our care.*

“ An Apostle wrote to a Christian Lady, that he
“ rejoiced greatly to find of her *children walking*
“ *in the way of truth:* (e) But we by this writing
“ must tell you, we are all greatly grieved, that
“ you, a child of such godly beloved parents be-
“ longing to us, should walk in the ways of sin
“ and wickedness, and obstinately persist in those
“ ways, and despise all christian intreaties, advice
“ and reproof. Oh! the many prayers put up, and
“ the many tears poured out for you! At present
“ our trial is great; your sins are uncommon. You
“ have refused the easy yoke of the Redeemer;
“ and have even neglected the external part of
“ God’s worship. You have derided communion
“ with God;—grieved your godly parents, resisted
“ with all your might, all means for your good,
“ and the way that leads to destruction is your
“ obstinate choice.—Poor youth! what will you do
“ in the end thereof? Oh! were you but sensible of
“ the privileges you trample upon, and the plea-
“ sures you forsake! Were you but acquainted with
“ the Redeemer’s love, grace, peace and pardon;
“ —how would you look to him, whom you have
“ pierced and mourn! We pray for this, and shall
“ continue to do so. But prayer for you is not
“ the only means appointed for your good: Re-
“ proof and admonition must have their proper
“ place; and as a church of Christ we have judged
“ it our duty to admonish you; and we do *hereby* in
“ our

“our Lord’s name admonish you of all your evil ways, and call you to unfeigned reformation and true repentance. Greatly desiring the blessing of Heaven may attend this for your good, we remain *Your best, though grieved friends, &c.*”

“— Ordered at our church-meeting.”—

Yefan. “Brethren, if you do approve of this, and order it as your admonition to *Cyndyn-ap-Gobgi-thiol*, signify it by lifting up your hands.”—
Which they unanimously did. And after some time spent in fervent prayer for a blessing thereon, the meeting concluded. The admonition, being signed by the Elders, was delivered to his father to give him.

Christophilus. Poor creature! how did he receive it? and what effect had it?

Epenetus. His father fixing on the best opportunity he could to give it him, with tears in his eyes said, Son, you have heard of the *Roman Senate*, here is a letter to you from a greater assembly.—The young man took it and read it. It shocked him: He went into a private room; his mother looked after him; he read it again, then stood still for some time with the letter in his hand; then read it a third time, and shed some tears, put it in his pocket, and was some time before he came out of the room: And when he came out said nothing, nor could his parents say any thing to him.

Neophytus. Now I begin to think that some good and great work followed upon this. I thought I must have given him up for lost; but I see here’s hope a dawning. Pray, beloved *Epenetus*, go on.

Epenetus.

Epenetus. He was present at family-prayer, and his dear father prayed with usual earnestness, and many tears for him; not forgetting to be thankful for the love, care and endeavours of the church, and that thoughtfulness which now appeared upon his poor son; but, when he had done, he could not speak to him for fear and concern, *Cyndyn's* thoughtfulness continued for some time, but gradually wore off; and before another church meeting he had finned himself into greater hardness and boldness than ever. And upon his parents' earnest intreaties that he would go to the church meeting, he answered with a disdainful sneer, No, no, they may send me another epistle,

Neophytus. Well, what will the end of this poor young man be! But pray go on.

Epenetus. At the church meeting his case and condition, with many tears and much concern, was talked and prayed over; and a *second* admonition was ordered; and it was to be delivered to him by word of mouth by *Didwyll* and *Diwyd*, two Ruling Elders: Who, accordingly, when they found him, did their work faithfully; and being men of judgment and zeal, talked to him so closely that he wept much; but still they were afraid that his tears were not tears of repentance, but of vexation; for his countenance appeared very sullen and unthankful.

Neophytus. How did the grace of God appear in them! And how did the corruption of nature discover itself in him!

Epenetus. Though the corruption of nature was suffered to break out awfully in that young man; yet you must think that even he was under restraints.

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One unrestrained sinner might destroy a country and then destroy himself: The depth of corruption is past finding out. But though he was under restraints, his wickedness appeared more and more flagrant: He derided his father and mother, despised and reproached the church, and proceeded into very awful degrees of boldness in sinning. The next church meeting the church and Elders took no further notice of him, than to pray for him with much concern and many tears; but before another meeting, the parents themselves desired the church might with all expedition proceed; for as the case stood, he only grew worse and worse. But *Nesam*, and his master *Edgar*, went to visit him once more. They talked to him, they prayed with him, they exhorted, they intreated; but it is very shocking to think with what a stiff unthankful countenance he behaved to them. And when he was told that the church must next opportunity consider their duty towards him, he with a sneer replied, So shall I consider mine to them, when I owe them any.

HOWEVER, the church meeting came, but *Cyndyn* would not come near them; they prayed, they wept before the Lord, and shewed great reluctance to go to the separating work. At last says

Dewi, " Dear brethren, what a sore trial is this
" upon us! *Cyndyn* is obstinate to the last degree;
" our endeavours are all frustrated, and our expectations slain; only we are yet in the way of
" duty, and who knows what the God of all grace
" will bring about! We are now fully convinced
" that further delays can but harden him, and give
" him in some sense a greater opportunity of cor-
" rupting

rupting and hardening others; and this to our grief in some degree we have already seen upon poor *Anianol*, of whom I believe we must also take publick notice quickly. Oh! may our young ones avoid them! — If any present think, that we should not now proceed, freedom of speech is granted. — Upon your silence, I then say, if you do as a church of Christ judge it your present duty to seperate *Cyndyn* from that visible relation he hath stood in to us hitherto, and if you do now, actually, in the name of Christ, cut him off, and put him away from among yourselves, into the same case with heathen men and publicans, signify it by lifting up your hands;” — Which they unanimously did; though with many tears. Then *Yefan* prayed for a blessing on what they had done; and *Diwyd* was appointed to inform of it.

Neophytus. Really there was an awful solemnity upon what they did; and indeed I think there is nothing in the world so solemn as an organized congregational church, acting in simplicity, according to the plain injunctions of their king, without any of the pompous inventions of men. — But, dear *Epenetus*, if you have any thing of an encouraging kind to relate concerning the young man, pray let us have it; for even his seperation, awful as it was, it is to be hoped might be of use to him.

Epenetus. When *Diwyd* informed him of it, *Cyndyn* said nothing; but discovered indignation in his countenance. His sinful companions now in a bantering way welcomed him into their number, and told him they were glad he was an heathen man: Said they, *Derwi*, who made your father a christian, made

"made you a heathen! Such power the vain man assumes! Let them and their whims perish together. Come, *Cyndyn*, forgive and forget them; they have done you no hurt; you know we are in the way of true pleasure; never dream of any thing to come; enjoy the present.

He made a shift to laugh along with them; but in the midst of his laughter his heart was sad. He endeavoured by sinful ways, to make himself easy and merry; but there was something that stung him; he never could come at the same pitch of mirth with his companions. When his laughter was loud, and his countenance brave, they clapped him on the back, as a *lad of heart*; but when a cloud hung, though but for a minute upon him, they would banter him for a sneaking weak soul, inclining to be *religious* again. So that among them he had no great comfort, and at home he had none; for his mind was averse to religion.—Nor had his parents any comfort in him: Ever and anon he would threaten to leave them; and one night he takes his opportunity; informs nobody of his design, and away he goes. It was some little time before his parents knew that he was gone in earnest; but when they knew, nobody can tell what distress they were in. But they went both to prayer, and you must think with many tears committed him to God, wherever he was. They prayed the Elders and some friends to come to their house, and keep a day of prayer as before; which they also did. But the distress of the parents was great. Sometimes they thought to search all *Britain* for him; at other times they thought they had committed him to God,

God, and *he* knew where he was and how to keep him. They were in a thousand thoughts a day about him, and ready to break their hearts.

Christophilus. O dear *Epenetus*, I have children of my own; you almost break my heart; do, pray, if you can, tell us what became of him?

Epenetus. Poor creature, he wandered up and down for some time, and had many thoughts of heart, but very few about religion,—and providentially fixed at a town called in that day *Llettyrdôr*, so called because of houses of entertainment by the water side, and from thence now called *Bedford*. There he met with some little employment, but very often lived upon the quick, which made him think, seeing he had no mind to starve, that he must not live too fast; and *that* kept him out of many a snare. He was very backward to inform any from whence he came, but his carriage distinguished him from the vulgar, and some of the inhabitants guessed that he came from *Caerludd*. However, as I said before, he was under a necessity of being sober, for he had not much to spend; and courteous, that some of the inhabitants might employ him.

Theophilus. Well, had his poor parents but known this, it would have been a great comfort to them; but poor hearts, their grief and distress must be great!

Epenetus. There was one thing they used now and then to comfort themselves with: They found there was a *bible* gone, which they hoped he had taken with him. — And upon the most diligent search they could not find the written *admonition*

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which

which the church sent him. Upon this their hopes and their fears suggested many things.

Neophytus. O! you raise my expectation; may I not be disappointed!

Epenetus. One day, walking near the town, in one of the meadows (many thoughts crowding his bewildered breast; distressed by most of them, and relieved by none) he sat down, safe from observation, and, bursting into tears, cried out "Oh! most miserable creature, what and where am I? I would none of God's counsels, and despised all his reproofs! I now eat of the fruit of my own ways, and am filled with my own devices! I despised the church of God, and am cast out of it! I dishonoured my father and mother; who, unless grief for an undutiful son prevents them, may be now singing his praises. They may think I am dead and gone; and indeed I may well wonder I am alive;—but here I am, the greatest sinner in the whole world, and yet live; for what end God knows, who only knows my distress! I am a greater sinner than any in hell, and wonder I am out of it; none there ever sinned as I have done! What shall I do? whither shall I go?"—There he cried and sobbed for a long while.

UPON this, he takes out of his pocket the *admonition*; (for he had it by him) and read it very deliberately, and with many tears; and then cried out, O *their* love and care! O *my* rebellion! Then takes his bible (for his parents were not mistaken, he had it with him) and reads, *Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken*

faken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way? And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? Or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: Know therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts. (c) Under the power of this he fell as one slain, and lay on the ground in very great distress; for every part of what he had read bound him down; nor was he able to look up.

Neophytus. O poor creature! now he wanted Dewi and Yefan.

Epenetus. Ay, ay, father or mother, or any friend; but here he was alone, no body near him but poor ignorant heathen men, and his own mind filled with nothing but the most dismal apprehensions;—and of returning to *Caerludd* he durst not entertain a thought.

Neophytus. Did he not pray in this distress?

Epenetus. He durst not do that; he thought that if he spoke a word he should be struck to hell at once; but his heart was ready to break with desires, and he had something like *Groans* that could not be uttered.

Neophytus. But what course did he take?

Epenetus. He went home in the evening to his lodgings, such as they were, neither ate nor drank, had no sleep but distressing slumbers; and his great distress of mind fell under the notice of his acquaintance, who kindly asked him how he did? He

Q2 answered,

(c) Jer. li. 17—19.

answered, He did not know. He was asked, Whether he had the perfect use of his senses? No, nor never had. They told him, They thought he was under trouble of mind. He answered, Not half enough. One, who seemed to be a more particular acquaintance than all the rest, desired him to take a walk with him; which he did. Says this acquaintance to him, whose name was *Ymgais*, Pray, be free with me, and tell me, what is the matter with you?

Cyndyn. That is more than I can do; for my concern is deeper than words can reach.

Ymgais. Then I suppose you think you have *sinned* in somewhat; but I have two things to tell you for your comfort; your sin cannot be great, I am sure; and I know a *Druid* who can procure your peace.

Cyndyn. And, distressed as I am, I have two things to tell you: Though you are not so sinful as I am, yet you are a great sinner; and all the *Druids* in the world cannot help you.

Ymgais. Your sins, indeed, you know best, but none of my neighbours who have known me from a child will say, that I am a great sinner; but pray, what makes you think so of me?

Cyndyn. Nay, I know it is true, though I do not say that you are a greater sinner than any of your neighbours; you all know better things than you do, and so you do not only sin, but sin against knowledge, which must make the sin great; and of persons in your state it is said, That when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but imprisoned the truth, and liked not to retain God in their knowledge. And though you know the great

great God must be an infinite Spirit, yet you become vain in your imaginations, and change his glory into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things; and sinfully think, that to torment and sacrifice some of those creatures, will satisfy the eternal Majesty for your sins. And how can you dishonour him more than by entertaining such a base thought of him?

Ymgais. I am amazed! I never heard such talk in my life! Pray, where did you learn this?

Cyndyn. The eternal God hath revealed his pleasure in word and writing unto the children of men; and though I am a very great sinner, he hath favoured me with that book; I have it in my pocket, and I will read some part of it to you:—And so read the sermon of *Christ* upon the mount, and *Paul's* discourse to the *Athenians*.

Ymgais. O strange! What knowledge you have! My heart trembles! Who are you? I wish I knew the book; will you teach me to know something of it? I have a private place where you and I may be together all day, without being disturbed; and you shall want for nothing. Will you comply?

Cyndyn. Yes, whatever comes of me I will do all that I can for *your* good. — So they fixed time and place, and spent many days together. *Cyndyn* had a small *catechism*, which he made use of under *Edgar*, and was now of great service to him. And though the heaviness of his mind was very great, yet this work, providence had cast upon him, was not only of great use to his new acquaintance, but to him-

self also; being employed in things that were still proper for him in his distressful condition.

Christophilus. Poor creature! he discovered a principle of love and pity to poor sinners; but pray go on; for my heart begins to rejoice.

Epenetus. His heart for a long while was heavy, and now his labours were constant. He had much business to inform himself, that he might inform others; for now he had not only *Ymgais*, but his family, and two or three more of their acquaintance, under his daily instruction; and he himself was no great proficient in divinity. He had neglected it too much; and had forgotten much of what he had once taken in; so now his labour was great with himself, to recover what he had lost, and to inform himself of other things in the best manner he could; and being well satisfied that his endeavours with those poor heathen men could be of no use without the blessing of God, he thought he would, though under his load, pray with them; and thought with himself that God might hear his poor wretched prayers for them, and also convince them, by that means, that prayer was a duty owing to God, and teach them after what manner it must be performed. But his heart did so upbraid and condemn him, that he had much ado to bring himself to it; and though to pray alone was his sorest task, yet God did bring him to pour out his heart before him, with tears innumerable and groans unutterable.

Neophytus. Well, I hope his deliverance was at hand.

Epenetus. God was pleased to exercise him yet with distance and distress: It is not God's usual way

way to bring such people at once into comfort. Now he prayed, but always afraid lest his private prayers should be heard by any mortal.

Theophilus. Ay, I remember you told us, that when he seemed religious before, he used to pray aloud, knowing his voice must fall under observation, but now he prayed like one under a real work; but such a teacher of divinity, with poor creatures to attend his instructions, I never heard of before. — But pray how did he go on?

Epenetus. You know God does not despise the day of small things; his way was to read chapter after chapter to them; and ever and anon they said, What is that? Sometimes he would tell them what he thought in a few words; and sometimes he would say, I do not know, but I wish some people that I know were here to tell you and me too. Then he would read on again, and when any of them pleased, he was again interrupted in the same manner. This was the morning's work; but in the afternoon their business was with the *Catechism*; and in his way he explained it to them; and then put some questions, as to faith and experience; and in a little time, they told him that they renounced *Heathenism* for ever; and saw themselves ruined and lost by reason of sin; and with the mouth confessed *Christ*, the Son of God, as their only Saviour from sin. But there was one of them told him, he believed he was too great a sinner to be saved, and with tears cried out, I am undone, undone! Poor *Cyndyn* went to speak comfortably to him, and mentioned that text, *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*

sinners, of whom I am chief. (d) But as he mentioned the word to comfort *another*, beyond his own expectation his *own* soul was relieved, his fetters fell off, his steps were enlarged, and his lips were opened to shew forth the praises of his Redeemer. Oh, how did he speak of his love and blood! and how did he before them all loath himself! He lifted up his voice and wept, and bid them not be cast down, for his tears were tears of joy; he had never felt such joy and such mourning in his life, and they with him shed tears in abundance. It was a very endearing, instructing opportunity to them, which they never afterwards forgot.

Neophytus. O *Epenetus*, now you touch me! What, is *this* the young man I gave up for a reprobate? Is *this* the rebellious child? Pray, *Epenetus*, proceed.

Epenetus. Now he went about his work more chearfully; and, as he now sojourned in *Ymgais's* house, he told him, That family-worship, night and morning, was the duty and the glory of all christian families; and that all the christian families in *Catrludd* did so worship in the beauties of holiness; and that his dear parents (of whom he could not speak without tears) fervently and constantly attended thereunto. He was desired then to go before them in family-worship, which he did, and several of the neighbours were generally present, which made the house like a little church; and his poor endeavours were attended with precious success. But *Ymgais* himself was his bosom-friend, who eminently profited in the christian religion, greatly encouraged his

his young teacher, and was a great blessing to his neighbourhood.

Christophilus. But did not *Cyndyn* greatly want to return to *Caerludd*?

Epenetus. He did so; and was always talking of *Caerludd*; of the blessed church of *Christ* there; of his father and mother and other friends: But though he greatly desired it, and a greater blessing he thought under heaven he could not desire, yet could never bring up his heart to a resolution of returning; the thoughts of his deportment there, his being cast out of the church as a vessel wherein is no pleasure, his forsaking such tender pious parents, would so fly in his face. Sometimes he would think of the prodigal's words, *I will arise and go to my father*; but then he thought, if his father frowned upon him, it would kill him.

HOWEVER, *Ymgais* having informed himself of *Cyndyn's* father's name, and that the christian assembly *Cyndyn* talked so much of, met for publick worship somewhere near *Dwrborth*, now called *Dwrgate* or *Dowgate*, one day says to his wife, I am going a journey; be kind to *Cyndyn*, I shall not be very many days before I return; and so set out. — It was not long before he got to *Caerludd*, staid at his inn that night, and next day, being the first day of the week (for he ordered it so on purpose) he enquired which was his way towards *Dwrborth*? When he came near there, he enquired, Where the christian assembly used to meet? found the place and sat down, expecting to see, what he never saw in his life; — A christian church worshipping their Redeemer. —

ANON the place began to fill; all had gravity and seriousness in their countenances, but when the churches began their worship in singing, *Ymgais* was so filled with holy amazement and heavenly pleasure, that he could hardly stand under the weight thereof. To see and hear men, women and children singing the praises of their God; some with tears of joy, others with the most chearful yet serious countenances, made him wonder where he was, whether in the body or out of the body, and whether he was not unknown to himself got to heaven or no. When singing was over, *Yefan* prayed with judgment, zeal and affection, and then preached; upon all which the stranger thought there was very great glory. When worship was over, says *Ymgais* to one that was next him, Pray, Sir, is there one *Gobeithiol* in this assembly? Says the other, my name is so; I am the man. Says *Ymgais*, Sir, I am a christian; and live in the country; and should be very glad of some acquaintance with you. Says *Gobeithiol*, Pray Sir, go home to dinner with me and my wife; which he did, and many thoughts of heart he had, how to tell them the story that was upon his mind. Having entered the house and sat down, says

Mwynedd. Pray, Sir, how do they do at and about *Hyfrydle*, (for I suppose you come from thence) and how is *Ffyddlon* and *Cywir*, and all our dear brethren and friends?

Ymgais. Madam, I do not come from thence, I come from *Llettyr-dŵr*.

Gobeithiol.

Gobeithiol. Oh dear, What and a *christian*! you make my heart rejoice; I never heard of any christians there.

Ymgais. We are but a very few of us, and very lately converted.

Gobeithiol. How is it with you in your soul, as to faith and comfort?

Ymgais. Ah! dear Sir, my faith is very weak, my comfort low; but this day —

Gobeithiol. Well a very great mercy it is to have any measure of that great work; where it is but begun, we are confident it shall be finished to the day of *Christ*: Not very many years ago, I had none of that work in my soul.

Ymgais. And not many months ago I had none of it, and yet I think God begun upon me the *first* in our neighbourhood.

Mwynedd. Pray, Sir, by what means?

Ymgais. Madam, by means of a young man that came to our neighbourhood, and fixed providentially among us. — Upon his mentioning the words *young man*, they both withdrew for sometime; and when they returned he could see how it had been with them. Afterwards their words were few, but favourable and useful; and when they went out in the afternoon, they desired he would sit with them and return. In the afternoon *Dewi* preached, and every part of the worship was attended with glory. When worship was over, *Gobeithiol* goes to *Dewi*, and says to him, Pray, Sir, step into our house as you go by; which he accordingly did. Says

Gobeithiol. Sir, this Gentleman is a stranger, but a christian; he knows nothing of *Hyfrydle*, he

comes from *Llettyrdŵr*, and I thought it convenient you should have a little conversation with him before he goes out of town, so I desired you to step in.

Dewi. My dear brother, I thank you; and to you, my dear christian brother, I testify unfeigned love, and am heartily glad to see you: Pray how long have you been a christian?

Ymgais. It is now several months ago since I was convinced of the vanity of Heathenism; and I was some time after then, before I had acquaintance with the Person of Christ, the design of his coming into the world, and the work he went through for sinners; and when I saw my own lost and undone condition, it was some time before I believed in Jesus Christ, and I bless the Lord for this day; I never had such a day in my life.

Dewi. I never heard of christians at *Llettyrdŵr*, but I rejoice now to see and hear a christian from thence. Pray what number may you be?

Ymgais. About five or six of us, I hope, love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dewi. Pray, how did christianity enter among you? Who was the preacher?

Ymgais. Really, Sir, I never saw nor heard a preacher of the gospel, before this day; but God in his providence sent a person among us, who, after *some time*, proved of great use to us; and for him we shall bless God to all eternity.

Dewi. After *some time*? What did not he fall to his work, as soon as ever he came?

Ymgais. No, Sir; not till after several months, and it was with me he began.

Dewi.

Dewi. You make me very eager to hear this story more particularly, pray how was it?

Ymgais. Why, Sir, a young man came to our town, and took a mean lodging not far from my house; so he and I contracted a sort of intimacy; he kept no company, but in a still, quiet manner would do any little business people would employ him in, often took solitary walks in our meadows, with a countenance generally much dejected, which made some of us think he was melancholy. But upon one very extraordinary time of distress, I asked him to take a walk with me, which he did; and I told him I thought his mind was distressed about some sin, but I had two things, I told him to mention for his comfort; first, that he was a young man and could not be a great sinner; and, secondly, that I was acquainted with a *Druid* that could procure his peace. And he replied, distressed as I am, I have two things to tell you; though you are not so sinful as I am, yet you are a great sinner, and all the *Druids* in the world cannot help you: And it was thus our discourse began, and thus the work of God began at *Llettyrdŵr*.

Dewi. Now because this was a young man, sister *Mwynedd*, the very thoughts of what you have gone through renews your grief; but I am ready to say to you, "Refrain thy voice from weeping" and thine eyes from tears; there is hope in "thine end, and thy child shall return again to his own border:" And who knows but this may be your son.

Mwynedd. Oh my dear *Pastor*, do not raise any such expectations in me!

Dewi.

Dewi. Why really not unlikely; but I myself am afraid to ask any thing further, upon so tender a concern; but yet I must; pray, Sir, what was his name?

Ymgais. Sir, you make me afraid to tell it;—his name is *Cyndyn*.

Mwynedd. Oh *Cyndyn*! *Cyndyn*! Not my *Cyndyn* sure! Too much, too much, — *sinks away.* —

GOBEITHIOL under many tears takes her up — and after some time says, Come my dear, you do not know what may be in this story; let us examine into it more particularly in a composed temper.

Mwynedd. Oh! you dear christian stranger, do not deceive me: Is he my son?

Ymgais. Madam, I really think so.

Christophilus. Oh my dear *Epenetus*, this story comes a little too close to a tender parent.

Epenetus. Well, then, let tender parents guess at the rest of it; and I shall only say, That many of the godly in *Caerludd* rejoiced greatly that evening, the poor parents had not a wink of sleep all night for joy. Messengers were sent the very next day for *Cyndyn*, and with them a godly gifted young man to stay with, preach to, and assist the few christians at *Llettyrdŵr*. With all expedition possible *Cyndyn* came, fell down at his parents' feet, who wept on his neck, spoke comfortably to him, blessed God, called the godly Elders and many brethren together, to worship God and give praise; ordered fresh apparel for him, and they began to be merry.

THE very next Lord's day, it was thought-fit he should give some publick account of the dealings
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of God with him, and it was a very great day to them all. He was then according to his own desire proposed for fellowship. Poor *Anianol*, another rebellious son, and now under publick admonition, was present, and in hearing *Cyndyn*, was melted and converted, and with many tears spoke briefly of the grace of God to him; for he could not refrain, though he was not called to it, and humbly desired the Elders would propose him also. And accordingly the next church meeting day was a very full one, they both spoke their experiences of the work of God, and to the great joy of the church were received.

CYNDYN lived an eminent blessing to his parents and to the church; and *Anianol* carried it so, in a close walk with God, at home and abroad, that his humble, holy, prudent conversation, accompanied with all diligence in every duty; did in the hand of the Spirit of the Lord, effect a great change in his father, who had been cast out of the church; and after a while he, under many tears, gave the Elders an account of the grace of God to him, and humbly desired to be proposed for fellowship with the church; accordingly he was proposed, and in due time re-admitted, and there was great joy before the Lord, on the account of this also.

Theophilus. So we see their trials, though bitter, were over-ruled to bring about sweet comforts. Dear *Epenetus*, we thank you; but I think that a few weeks ago you mentioned some trials they met with, or were likely to meet with, from persons stiffly maintaining some dangerous opinions; and *Yefan* in his visits

visits had some concern with them: Pray do you remember that?

Epenetus. Yes, yes, there were two sorts of them springing up; such as denied the glory of Christ's person, undertaking and work, directly, or by necessary consequences; and such as thrust out the good law of God, and denied the proper necessity of obedience thereto, and with both they had a great deal of trouble, but by the mercy of God they kept them under.

Theophilus. And shall we, God willing, next opportunity, be favoured with some account of the church, guarding itself against such opinions, and dealing with the authors and abettors of them?

Epenetus. If the Lord will, and if something that may be thought more convenient does not offer itself. So dear brethren, neighbours and friends, may all true comforts attend us and ours!—

DIALOGUE,

DIALOGUE IX.

One of the private meetings greatly disturbed by two erroneous persons, Deddfol and Digyfraith. Their ensnaring letters to a young christian. The first of them called before the Elders: His letter read: He denies imputed righteousness; is for a new law; denies the satisfaction of Christ, and his divine nature: Obstinate persists, and is sharply reprov'd.

CHRISTOPHILUS.

WELCOME my brethren and friends! though I have been here but a few minutes, yet I began to think them long without your company.

Philalethes. Why truly we might have been here a little sooner; only calling upon our neighbour *Syllogisticus* for his company, there was *Neophytus*, and three or four more, engaged in a debate on the *sagacity* of brute animals; and if I had not put them in mind of our time and business you must have waited longer.

Neophytus. My dear *Christophilus*, from some observations I had made on the *feathered* kind, I told my

my friends that there appeared, seemingly, a great deal of wisdom and sagacity upon them; and some of my neighbours here said, my words implied that they acted from *design*, and consequently must have *souls*. Now I did not say there was wisdom and sagacity *in* them, but *upon* them; which only implies that there is a supreme all-governing mind concerned in their affairs, without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground.

Theophilus. Well, well, at present we have another business to attend upon; you see *Epenetus* is present, and you may remember what was proposed and promised the last time.

Neophytus. True, so I do, and it was the remembrance of *that* brought up *this*. It grieved me to think that any of the children of men, with *rational* powers, should be wandering stars; when all other animals about us choose and pursue what is best for them. Each *kind* acts now, as their ancestors did a thousand years ago.—But man, *fallen* man, is unstable as water;—so many men so many minds; and often of the *same* man it may be said, so many months in so many minds. His *unsteadiness* is as wonderful as the *steadfastness* of other creatures put under his feet. And this giddiness is not confined to the low affairs of time, but extends itself to the great concerns of religion.

Theophilus. You run to some excess in this matter: There are thousands of the children of men that appear discreet in choosing and steady in pursuing things just and honourable: And as for all real converts,—whatever weaknesses attend them,—

God's

God's fear shall be so fixed in their hearts, that they shall not turn away from him.

Neophytus. This I do not deny: It is the God of all grace that strengthens and settles all those who are *stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.* But Oh, fallen man! How uncertain, light and vain! If God is not pleased to ballast him by his grace, every *wind of doctrine* carries him about.

Philalethes. Right, *Neophytus*, and I have often thought that judicious *established* christians are great *blessings* to the churches; but giddy minds, who are weary of old truths, and greedy of *novelties*, are great trials.

Syllogisticus. But God hath wise ends in suffering them; — and over-rules them for good to those churches that are found in the way of their duty. — Pray, *Epenetus*, how was it formerly?

Epenetus. I suppose you expect some account of trials in the church at *Caerludd*, from persons not found in the faith. — I told you there were several private meetings for conference on the things of God, set up in convenient places. The order of those meetings I gave you a short account of. * There were two men — the name of the one was *Deddfol*, and that of the other *Digyfraith* — who generally attended one of those meetings. They were two very differently minded, and being both of them forward talkers, they used to take up much time to little purpose; and having a high conceit of their own abilities would give place to none.

Neophytus.

* See Dial. iv. page 159.

Neophytus. But you said there was a person chosen monthly to preside in these meetings; Could not he command order, or their silence?

Epenetus. Haughty tempers are not very forward to submit. They thought they knew what and when to speak, and that others ought patiently to hear them.

Neophytus. Sure that meeting could not subsist long!

Epenetus. Several, indeed, of the serious christians for a time forsook it, while others from motives of curiosity flocked in. But, to prevent confusion, *Diaryd*, one of the *Ruling Elders*, was constantly there; and out of civility to him they frequently chose him to *preside*. The Pastor and Teacher understanding how things went, desired he would always attend, and exert himself among them for good.

Neophytus. And pray what did he do?

Epenetus. As it was his place frequently to pray, in *prayer* he would always mourn under a sense of their confusions; complained to God of the loss they sustained thereby, and cried for the wisdom which is from above, pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated; and that God by his gracious Spirit would promote love, establish peace, and lead into all truth. — In their heat of talk he would always *interpose*, and cool any rising passions, moderate or remove any odious consequences, and endeavour to reconcile them to the truth and to each other. These methods he often repeated, and with various success. — He would frequently make a solemn address to them, as he thought the case required:

quired: What under much concern he spoke to them one time was to the following purpose:

“BRETHREN, it is known to several of us what
“pleasure and comfort we have many a time en-
“joyed in this place. Here have we melted and
“mourned at our Redeemer’s feet, and here have
“we rejoiced and triumphed in his salvation. But
“our glory is in the dust: The enemy is come
“in like a flood upon us: Love begins to cool;
“a certain indication that iniquity abounds! In all
“our contentions *about* truth, the Spirit of truth
“does not appear. God hath a controversy with us,
“and it becomes us to mourn and repent. I will
“endeavour to bear my part with you in that
“work; and let us agree, that the next meeting
“here, shall be a meeting *only* of prayer, for that
“very end. Who knows what our God will please
“to do for us!”

THE time came, and was kept in prayer with many tears before the Lord. Neither *Daddol* nor *Digyfraith* were there: However the truth lost nothing by their absence:—There was a young man present whose name was *Hygar*; a very amiable christian, and remarkably inquisitive after truth. With him they both in their turns had been tampering, in order to make a profelyte of him. And finding them both absent, and so despising this opportunity of prayer and humiliation, *Hygar* said,

“FATHERS and brethren, I am thankful for this
“opportunity; for I trust God is among us of a
“truth. He hath delivered my soul from death,
“and kept my feet from falling. Those two noisy
“persons, who are absent, discover what acquaint-
“tance

“ tance they have with God, by despising prayer;
 “ and I humbly think it is not our duty to hear
 “ them wrangle any more. They have both in
 “ their turns spread a net for me; but the Spirit
 “ of the Lord hath mercifully kept me. I have a
 “ letter from each of them in my pocket, which
 “ our honoured Elder *Diwyd* may please to read
 “ in the hearing of us all.”

ACCORDINGLY the letters were read, and the contents of them abhorred by all present. And it was resolved, in the strength of the Lord, to guard against the writers of them, as persons of pernicious, though of different principles.

Neophytus. If possible, I humbly desire the contents of these letters.

Epenetus. He, whose name was *Deddfol*, wrote thus: “ My dear and much beloved *Hygar*, It is
 “ with a great deal of pleasure I consider your un-
 “ common attainments; your diligent enquiry after
 “ truth, your zeal for virtue, and to crown all
 “ your exemplary and ornamental practice. You
 “ raise my expectations, and I trust you will never
 “ disappoint them. — You are well acquainted
 “ with the nature and necessity of moral actions,
 “ or good works; and you know, that were virtue
 “ not to be rewarded with glory hereafter, yet every
 “ wise man would pursue it: How much more then,
 “ seeing, we are sure, if we hold out to the end,
 “ we shall *for it* have an abundant entrance into
 “ eternal happiness! *Well done thou good and faith-*
 “ *ful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*
 “ But persons who have no good works to produce
 “ at last, shall be dismissed to eternal darkness.

“ All

“ *All shall receive according to what they have done*
“ *in the body.* — We should, indeed, give to Christ
“ his *restoral* glory, for he is a person great above
“ all angels. He hath laid before us a good ex-
“ ample, and given us a very equitable law. We
“ should, also, ascribe *grace* unto him, for accept-
“ ing the sincere obedience of faith, though im-
“ perfect; for imputing it to us for righteousness,
“ according to his mild and gracious law, and
“ crowning our persevering virtue with glory. Oh,
“ what grace is this! What proportion is there be-
“ tween our obedience and the reward! — I have
“ many things to impart to you when convenient;
“ but by what I have briefly written, you will be
“ able to know what judgment to form of the
“ *Teacher's* and *Pastor's* preaching. Press on and
“ improve. Your *reason* is not a rule to be de-
“ spised: Consult and comply with it, and you
“ will honour him who gave you such an eminent
“ share of it, and secure to yourself eternal felicity.
“ This is the earnest desire of your's in true af-
“ fection, &c.”

Neophytus Well, what an ensnaring thing it was!
A christian truly had need enough to watch and pray.

Theophilus. Ay, *Neophytus*, for there are many
that lie in wait to deceive. There are many things
in that letter, very much like truth; and yet, there
is not, perhaps, one part of it, taken in its pro-
per connection, but militates against the truth as it
is in Jesus. And even in our day we have, more
the pity, a great deal to the same purpose, from
the pulpit and the press; and the more pernicious,
because dressed up in a manner more agreeable to
the

the polite taste of the age.—But pray, *Epenetus*, please to give us the other man's letter.

Epenetus. *Digyfraith* wrote to this effect: "Dear
" *Hygar*; The great attention you seem to pay to
" what I deliver at the conference, encourages me
" thus to address you. Indeed from my very first
" acquaintance with you, I have thought the grace
" of God was your delight; I must say it is mine:
" Nor indeed is it needful we should hear of any
" thing else; for by grace we are saved. Un-
" feigned love prompts me to write to you, lest
" you should by any means be entangled with the
" yoke of bondage. What persons call our *sins*
" were long ago satisfied for, and according to God's
" covenant are remembered no more. Christ hath
" by once offering up himself, perfected for ever
" all that are sanctified, or *set apart* for him.—
" How can it become us to mourn and confess our
" sins, when we have none that can be truly called
" ours? Whatever our defects may be, they work
" for our good, as *all things* do. I used to be
" in bonds and trouble heretofore, but it was be-
" cause I knew no better. I am now at perfect
" rest, and whatever I do or omit disturbs me not.
" I do not know any *law* I am under, and there-
" fore am no transgressor. Love is all my law,
" and perfect love casteth out fear. I pity poor
" weak whining people, who yet would be called
" christians; I trust you are of another growth.
" Our *Teacher* delivers many things very well; but
" really the *Pastor* often grieves me. Oh, that he
" did but see things as I do? But by what I men-
" tioned, you may know how to judge of them
" both.

“ both. Hope, another opportunity, to let you know
“ more of my mind; for, filled with earnest desires
“ after your established peace, I am your’s, &c.”

Neophytus. Well, this was a base, insinuating letter; but was not calculated to ensnare so readily as the other: For here all virtue is neglected, and repentance trampled upon.

Theophilus. This had, however, very plausible pretensions. Christ bearing our sins; making complete satisfaction for them, &c.—In short, the good men who heard both the letters read, might very well abhor the tendency of their contents; for though they were, like *Sampson’s* foxes, tail to tail, having different views, they had firebrands fixed between them.—But how did *Diwyd* conclude that opportunity?

Epenetus. He gave *Hygar* the best advice he could before them all; and with his leave put both the letters in his pocket.

Neophytus. Pray what was the advice he gave him?

Epenetus. After a few remarks on both the letters, he said, “ My dear *Hygar*! It is by omnipotent grace that you have been delivered from
“ such destructive principles as both the letters contain. It may be easily proved, that the authors
“ of these letters deny the Lord that bought them.
“ Oh, what reason you have to bless God! Nets
“ were spread for your soul, and you have escaped.
“ I hope the Spirit of the Lord will abundantly
“ help you to search the scriptures, and to compare spiritual things with spiritual; to pray without ceasing, and to follow the footsteps of the
“ flock. By-paths may seem to possess inviting
“ charms, but their end is destructive. As you

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“ would

“ would avoid the hook beware of the bait. Bring
 “ every opinion, whoever maintains it, *to the law*
 “ *and to the testimony*. Yet you would do well to
 “ *consult* christians of standing, and an honourable
 “ character, especially your Pastor or Teacher. Be
 “ clothed with humility; for God giveth grace to
 “ the humble. If any man will do his will, he
 “ shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God:
 “ And we are sure, that *the secret* of the Lord is
 “ with them that fear him, and he will shew them
 “ his covenant.”

Theophilus. Were all professors to take this advice, what peaceable flourishing churches should we have! But there are too many that covet to be *remarkable*; and at that *they* cannot come without being *singular*; then seeing they cannot in the *trodden* path attain this end, they will strike out into a by-path, where (such is the wretched condition of fallen man) they are pretty sure to have some admirers.

Christophilus. To aim at things singular, and out of the common way, is with them true greatness of soul. What is common, affords them no entertainment. Some of them will grant, that our first *Reformers* were honest men; but yet little acquainted with true freedom of thought, and the bright dictates of reason. Others affirm, that they were men of very little light. But oh! my brethren, may that blessed Spirit, that shone with so eminent a brightness in them, attend the professors of the present day! May we see their religion, their holiness, their humility and zeal revive! — Persons are seldom very great, who imagine themselves so; and yet, herein the greatness of the *present* age very much consists.

Neophytus.

Neophytus. May my heart ever be able to say to my Redeemer, *Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel.* I bless the Lord for the promise of the Spirit of truth, and his operations; and would be thankful that I sojourn at *Potheina*. — But, pray, what method did they take with those two men at *Caerludd*?

Epenetus. I told you, that *Diwyd*, with *Hygar*'s leave, put both the letters in his pocket; and now must tell you, that the very next day he shewed them to the Pastor and Teacher, who immediately sent for the other Elders. They mourned under their trials, and, after consultation, agreed to meet as *Elders*, — not forbidding any of the church that might desire to be present, — to seek God, and to reason with *Deddfol* about his principles.

THE day being come, and *Deddfol* being present, *Yefan* begins in prayer. He mourned before the Lord under a deep sense of deficiencies attending them in their ministerial work; that they had been far short in explaining and establishing the blessed truths of the gospel, which might be one occasion of their present troubles. He earnestly entreated, in behalf of the mistaken brother, that he might be convinced and recovered, &c.

PRAYER being ended, *Deawi* said, “ Brethren,
 “ the enemy of our peace and comfort hath many
 “ methods and deep devices, to disturb and inter-
 “ rupt the blessed work of our Redeemer’s king-
 “ dom. Wherefore we have great need of the
 “ whole armour of God. Our gracious Father hath
 “ given us a blessed *rule*, whereby we are to try
 “ every spirit; and our Lord himself hath given us
 “ an example how to baffle the enemy’s tempta-

“ tions, by our referring to it; — *It is written.* Some
“ trials we have had from persons guilty of a disagree-
“ able walk; and, through grace, by attending to
“ our duty, have met with encouraging success.
“ We little thought ourselves in danger from tenets
“ against the truth; and therefore, perhaps, were
“ not sufficiently guarded. But now we are awaken-
“ ed from our security, and called to defend the
“ everlasting gospel, and to use all our endeavours,
“ under God, for recovering the erroneous. It is
“ providentially so ordered, that we need not be
“ detained upon the inquiry — What are the things
“ we have to charge our brother *Deddfol* here pre-
“ sent with? The principles now maintained by
“ him, into which he also endeavours to draw others,
“ you shall have under his own hand — *He reads*
“ *his letter* — The contents of this letter we shall
“ endeavour, in scripture light to consider. But,
“ brother *Deddfol*, do you own this to be your let-
“ ter? And does it contain your present judgment?”

Deddfol. Yes, the letter is mine, — though I do not think it very fair to make it thus publick without my consent. However, I own it is according to my present judgment.

Dewi. “ It was, doubtless, the duty of him who
“ received it, to ask advice upon it; and equally
“ so, if thought necessary, to make it publick.
“ Your sentiments, we apprehend, are very erro-
“ neous and of dangerous consequence; therefore it
“ was *Hygar*’s duty to inform us of them; and be
“ it known to you, that it is your duty to renounce
“ them.”

Deddfol.

Deddsol. When I am convinced, that they are errors, nobody need tell me, that it is my *duty* to renounce them; but so long as I apprehend them to be *truths*, I shall think myself a *transgressor* in renouncing them.

Dewi. “ When you gave yourself *wisbly* unto the Lord, and unto us in church-fellowship, you professed before many witnesses — That you could do nothing toward fulfilling the broken law of God, or satisfy offended justice for sin; — that Christ was the complete Saviour, who, by his Spirit, made you willing to receive and rely on himself alone, for holiness and salvation: But in this letter, all this seems to be cast off.”

Deddsol. You say I *seem* to cast off all this; but every thing is not as it may *seem* at first view. But, to be explicit, whatever comports not with *reason*, in what I might formerly have said, I should without delay depart from it, and shew myself a man. If I fell into the common road, without mature consideration, it is what others besides me have done; but it is high time both for them and me to choose the path of judgment.

Dewi. “ Whether you have, upon what you call mature consideration, chosen or *forsaken* the path of judgment, we shall, I hope, fairly and impartially consider. The scripture tells us, that we are *justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*. But you plead that justification is to be obtained by *virtue* and *good works*.”

Deddsol. But I do not mean thereby works in every respect *perfect*, answerable to a *severe* law

that admits of no *abatement*; for I am sensible that so, no flesh can be justified.

Derwi. "You have all the Liberty you can desire to explain yourself."

Deddfol. I mean neither more nor less than, that we are justified in the same manner as *Abraham* was, of whom it is said, that he was justified by works. His *faith*, being a work, was reckoned to him for righteousness. It was by *grace* that the rigour of the law was *relaxed*, and such advantageous terms provided.

Derwi. "What did Christ obtain for fallen man?"

Deddfol. Mild and gracious terms of life and glory, most justly fitted to his present state.

Derwi. "What did Christ do, in order to obtain those mild and gracious terms?"

Deddfol. He did whatever God the Father required; and thereby became our gracious Lord and Lawgiver. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*

Derwi. "Pray what are those mild and gracious terms?"

Deddfol. Only faith, repentance, *sincere* obedience, and perseverance.

Derwi. "What is the law that requires them?"

Deddfol. The gospel.

Derwi. "What is *faith*?"

Deddfol. A sincere assent to the truth of all that is recorded concerning Christ.

Derwi. "And how does faith justify?"

Deddfol. As an act of our's in obedience to a gospel precept, which requires it. But let faith be never

never so sincere, without other works, it is dead, and cannot justify.

Dewi. "Pray are you a justified person?"

Deddfol. So far, and so long, as I fulfil the terms required, I am; but *complete* justification is not till the day of judgment.

Dewi. "And how do you expect to be justified *then*?"

Deddfol. In the same manner as now, with the additional fulfilment of the term of perseverance, or continuance in well-doing.

Dewi. "At present I shall ask you no more questions: But, from what you have already said, I must, in the first place, as your Pastor, charge you with perverting the scriptures. You contend from *James*, that *Abraham* was justified by *works*, and that in an *absolute* sense: And, to avoid contradicting *Paul*, who asserts that *Abraham* was justified by *faith*, you plead that this faith is a *work*. You know very well that we are not at present considering, what that is which justifies our *faith* before men, but what that is which justifies our *persons* before God. St. *Paul's* design was to maintain the *latter*, against legalists; (e) that of St. *James* to vindicate the *former* against the licentious. (f) *Faith*, according to *Paul*, must mean something *opposite* to any work of our's, otherwise his reasoning must be perfectly unintelligible."

Deddfol. But *James* having asserted that *Abraham* was justified by *works*, says, that so the scrip-

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ture

(e) *Romans* iv. 3—6.(f) *James* ii. 20—23.

ture was fulfilled, which declares, *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.**

Derwi. "Abraham's being justified by works was a great truth, in the sense St. James intended it; nor is the account, given by the great Apostle of the *Gentiles*, of his justification by faith before God, less so. And, it is evident Abraham was justified, in this latter sense, long before he offered up his son *Isaac*." †

Didwyl.

* "I think nothing can be easier, than to understand, how this — *That faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness* — may be said in full consistence with our being justified by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, that is, our being treated by God as righteous, for the sake of what he has done and suffered: For though this be the meritorious cause of our acceptance with God, yet faith may be said to be imputed to us *est dixerunt*, in order to our being justified, or becoming righteous: That is, as we are charged as debtors, in the book of God's account, what Christ has done, in fulfilling all righteousness for us, is charged as the GRAND BALANCE of the account; but that it may appear, that we are, according to the tenor of the gospel, intitled to the benefit of this, it is also entered in the book of God's remembrance, 'that we are believers:' And, this appearing, we are graciously discharged, yea and rewarded, as if we ourselves had been perfectly innocent and obedient." *DODDRIIDGE'S Fam. Exposit. on Romans iv. 9. and WITTEUS, OEcon. Fed. Lib. iii. cap. viii. § 56.*

† TOWARDS reconciling these apparently contradictory assertions of the two Apostles, it should be remembered — That as they both were equally taught and guided by the same unerring Spirit, the contradiction cannot be real — That as nothing should be considered as an established principle of faith, which is not in some part of scripture delivered with perspicuity; so that perspicuity should be sought for principally where the point in question is most professedly handled — That as *Paul*, undoubtedly, treat

Didwyl. " With your leave, honoured Pastor, I
 " charge *Deddsol* with downright opposition to the
 " blessed law of God. He says, it is *relaxed*, which
 " borders upon blasphemy. He asserts, we are under
 " a sort of law which does not require *perfect* obe-
 " dience; which is the same as to establishing *ini-*
 " *quity* by a law, and *this* is the work he ascribes
 " to our Redeemer. The law is holy, just and
 " good. As the divine perfections must not be in-
 " jured; so there must be, there can be, no relax-
 " ation of the divine law. The perfect law of
 " God makes a just representation of the essential
 " righteousness and holiness of the divine nature;
 " but a *relaxed* law never can do so. Moreover:
 " Without a righteousness every way *adequate* to the
 " eternal moral law of God, there is no going to
 " heaven; and it is certain, that *such* a righteous-
 " ness we have in Christ. Further: It is the duty
 " of sinners, who hear of Christ, to believe in
 " him; and this the perfect law of God demands.
 " — It makes my flesh tremble to hear persons
 " making void the law of Jehovah, and substi-
 " tuting in the room of it a fictitious one of their
 " own."

R 5

Deddsol.

treats of the point of justification more frequently than James (in *Rom. Galat. Ephes. &c.*) more fully, and as it were in *propria sede sua*; so Paul's assertion should not be explained by that of James, (who speaks but once on the occasion, and that not *ex professo*) but rather James should be explained according to Paul. See, on this controverted subject, the learned and justly celebrated WITSIUS, *OEcon. Fœd. Lib. iii. cap. viii. § 25, 26.* and still more at large, the judicious and venerable TURRETINE, *Disputatio de concordia Pauli et Jacobi, &c.*

Deddfol. Pray, Sir, where does the moral law command faith and repentance?

Didwyll. "Give me leave, first, to ask you, "which is the great commandment in that law?"

Deddfol. I answer in our Lord's own words: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c.* this is the *first*; and the *second* is like unto it, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

Didwyll. "Well then, if I am bound to love "him so, I am equally bound to believe in him; "and also to repent, if I sin against him. And "if I am bound to *love* my neighbour, and that "as myself, I am bound to love myself: And if "so, to embrace every thing that may contribute "to my real good: Then, when I hear that Christ "is the Saviour of sinners, I am bound to embrace "him."

Deddfol. But man, such is his present state! stands in need of another and *milder* law; and doubtless, the *gospel* answers that end.

Didwyll. "Then *Paul* could never have maintained, that by faith the law was established; — "he must have said, that by the *gospel* the law "was disannulled: For a new law must exclude "the other. He might have said, *There is a law* "given, that can give life; and, righteousness *is* "by that law. But he positively asserts the contrary. (g) Besides: Your imaginary law is a plain contradiction in terms, and destroys itself. "It admits of *imperfect* obedience, that is to say, "of *disobedience*. And, pray, what a law-giver must "he be, who is the author of it?"

Yefan.

Yefan. " Pray, *Deddfol*, what are your reasons
" for concluding, that the gospel is properly a law?"

Deddfol. Sir, it is often called so in scripture.
We read that the isles should wait for Christ's law.
We are commanded to fulfil the law of Christ.
And pray, what can be meant by the law of faith?
and the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus?
In a word, will it not be a rule of judgment at
last, and therefore a law?

Yefan. " Law is a word of various acceptation.
" By the law of God we are sometimes to under-
" stand, *precepts* and injunctions given to the
" children of men, with binding and penal sanc-
" tions. This is *strictly* a law. But by the term
" law, we must often understand *doctrine* or in-
" struction. So, in that passage, *The isles shall wait*
" *for his LAW.* And, *The LAW shall go forth out*
" *of Zion.* In *this* sense the gospel may be called
" a law; but it does not consist of a body of pre-
" cepts, prohibitions and threatenings. We own,
" that we are under the law to Christ; but, by
" bearing one another's burdens, and so *fulfilling*
" the law of Christ, nothing can be intended but—
" our tender and loving carriage towards each
" other, in *imitation* of Christ who bore our bur-
" dens. The law of faith is the *doctrine* of faith.
" And *disobedience* to the gospel, consists in—re-
" fusing to submit to the *moral* command, which
" requires *love* to Christ out of a *pure* heart, a
" good conscience, and faith *unfeigned.*—The rule
" of judgment at last will be, the eternal moral
" law of God. The redeemed will be acquitted
" by it, on account of their divine Surety: The

“ rebellious will be treated with rigour, in proportion to the various degrees of *revelation* wherewith they have been favoured. All found in Christ at the Day of Judgment, will have a righteousness adequate to all the demands of the law; the rest shall stand or fall as they deserve, without respect of persons.”

Dewi. “ There are sufficient reasons, why the gospel cannot be a *new law*; for law and gospel are, and must be, specifically distinct. If the gospel be properly a law, how come sins against it to be *pardoned*? Was Christ under *that* law; to deliver them who are under it; or do they satisfy justice *themselves* for their own sins against it?”

Neophytus. Dear *Epenetus*, you surprize me! This man was a *Neonomian*! I could not have thought *Neonomianism* had been so old.

Epenetus. What, did you never read of the *Pharisees*? It is evident they did not place their righteousness in *perfect* obedience, but in what they esteemed *sincere*. Did they not endeavour to establish a righteousness short of what was perfect, in which they trusted? *St. Paul's* doctrine was charged with licentiousness: And who do you think laid that to its charge, but the *Neonomians* of that day? And it is not only a very *ancient*, but also a very *dangerous* error; as is evident from the Epistles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, and what is there said against it. * ——— But I was going to tell you, that

* SEE the *Neonomian* controversy discussed in a very judicious manner, in *WITSIUS's* excellent little treatise, intitled, *Animadversiones*

that, after *Dewi* said — “ Do they satisfy justice
 “ themselves for their own sins against this new
 “ law ? ” — the Elder, whose name was *Diwyd*,
 stood up and said, “ With your leave, my honoured
 “ Pastor, I must observe, that *Deddfol* is not for
 “ satisfaction to divine justice for any sin. This
 “ is evident from his letter, where he owns, *that*
 “ *Christ hath done great things for us*, by giving us
 “ a good example and an equitable law. And to
 “ my grief I have heard him despise the very term
 “ *satisfaction*, and saying, that it was *beneath* the
 “ divine goodness to insist upon it, and *impossible* for
 “ Christ to make it, if insisted upon.”

Yefan. “ I am afraid it is so. Errors generally
 “ go in clusters. When one enters, seven more
 “ attend it. To deny satisfaction for sin, is to
 “ rob us of that glorious distinction between the christi-
 “ tian religion and all other religions in the world.
 “ Herein, especially, ‘ God commendeth his love
 “ towards us, in that while we were yet sinners
 “ Christ

Questions Irénice, &c. The first in Britain, who spread the per-
 nicious error of turning the gospel into a new law, was that grand
 heresiarch *Morgan*, otherwise called *Pelagius*, who was a native
 of Britain; and is said to have been abbot of the monastery of
 Bangor. He also pretended, that man is able to work out his
 salvation by the natural force of his free will; that hereby he may
 even attain to a state of perfection; that grace is given in pro-
 portion to our meriting it; and that there is no such thing as
 original sin. These unscriptural and destructive dogmas were dis-
 seminated in different parts of the christian world, by himself,
Celestius, his principal fellow-labourer, and other zealous disciples,
 in the beginning of the fifth century. But it hath subsisted under
 different forms to the present day; when our Lord’s caution is
 peculiarly seasonable — *Beware of the leaven of the pharisees!*

“*Christ died for us.*” ‘Herein is love, not that
 “we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent
 “his Son to be a *propitiation for our sins.*” ‘Even
 “Jesus, who *delivereth us from the wrath to come.*”
 “‘He was *made sin for us*; he hath redeemed us from
 “the curse of the law.’ ‘He loved us and gave
 “himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God
 “for a sweet-smelling savour’ — What, *Deddfol*,
 “deny all this, and profess to be a *christian*! Let
 “us have your thoughts plainly on this important
 “subject.”

Deddfol. The scriptures insist much on the love
 of God to the penitent, and upon his *grace* in for-
 giving their sins: But if he must receive *satisfac-*
tion, where is the *grace*, which you often call us to
 admire?

Yefan. “The divine perfections must not be in-
 “jured. God is infinitely *just*: And he will be so
 “in *justifying*, or he will never justify. What then?
 “Is it impossible he should be *gracious* also? Or,
 “is it impossible for mercy and truth to meet to-
 “gether, in the salvation of sinners? We are jus-
 “tified freely by his *grace*, but it is through the
 “redemption that is in *Christ Jesus*. Was it not
 “infinitely wise and rich *grace*, that found out the
 “way of our salvation; that fixed upon Christ,
 “covenanted with him, and gave him to undergo
 “what *we* deserved? Herein is love indeed!”

Deddfol. It is certain, that with God nothing
 is impossible: But we justly esteem those persons,
 as truly great, who freely and generously pass by
 offences, without demanding satisfaction; and the
 scripture says, *It is their glory to pass by a fault.*

Many

Many thousands there are who do it, and merit praise: And can *they* do what *God* cannot do! If it be true greatness in them to forgive freely, what is it in God to insist on satisfaction?

Yefan. " God can do nothing that implies weakness or deficiency: He *cannot lie*, and therefore he cannot pardon sin to the injury of his own righteousness and veracity. It is often commendable in man to change his mind, but God is infinitely perfect and cannot change. It is true greatness in God to proclaim himself—THE HIGH AND LOFTY ONE; but it is true greatness in the best of men to say — *I am less than the least of all saints*. God is the judge of all the earth, and will do nothing but what is right; and though private and personal offences may be dispensed with among men, (while at the same time the offended person may have several springs of satisfaction in view) pray, what sort of a judge must he be reckoned, who dispenses with law and justice, and Gallio-like, cares for none of those things?"

Deadfol. But, is it possible that God should so insist upon satisfaction for the sins of a poor worm; and then be so cruel as to inflict punishment upon the innocent!

Yefan. " We do not say, That he comes to a poor sinful worm and insists on satisfaction; but in the gospel he proclaims the glory of his wisdom, love and justice, in requiring, providing, and accepting a sacrifice for sin, which all the world of men and angels could neither offer nor invent. This is his own beloved Son, on whom
" he

“ he laid the iniquity of us all: And it pleased
 “ the Lord to bruise him.—Say not, that this was
 “ cruelty; it was our Redeemer’s free and volun-
 “ tary offer—*Lo, I come to do thy will; a body hast
 “ thou prepared for me!*”

Deddfol. If my sins are *satisfied* for, I need take
 no care how I live or act. What need to trouble
 my head about faith, repentance or obedience, since
 all disobedience is already *cancelled*? As long as I
 love obedience, I must hate such a doctrine.

Yefan. “ According to what you say, you do
 “ not love obedience at all: For were you safe
 “ from punishment, you would not think obedience
 “ necessary. You think your sins are not satisfied
 “ for, *therefore* you will obey, and thereby satisfy
 “ for your own sins: Ascribing that to your own
 “ wretched performances, which you deny the Re-
 “ deemer. Of Him it is said, That he gave him-
 “ self for us, *that he might redeem us from all ini-*
 “ *quity*; and you say, If you were redeemed, you
 “ would abound in all iniquity. The holy designs
 “ of redemption you oppose; in your own pitiful
 “ performances you trust; but distrust, and in ef-
 “ fect deny, Him, who is God over all, blessed
 “ for ever. But seeing the design of Christ’s death
 “ was not to satisfy divine justice for the sins of
 “ the people; pray, what was the design of it?”

Deddfol. He died, as a glorious martyr for the
 truth of his doctrine, and to give his followers an
 example, how they should do in a like case.

Yefan. “ Is this all that is meant by— *his re-*
 “ *deeming us from the curse of the law, being made*
 “ *a curse for us?* And is this all that is intended
 “ by

“ by — *his washing us from our sins in his own blood?* Was the agony of his soul for this? Did any of his followers, that have suffered martyrdom, ever cry out, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death?* Would it be their glory to cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* — We grant, his *patience, meekness, and readiness* to undergo all the will of God, was an *example for us*; but deny this to be the *principal* intent of his death, as long as scripture language hath any meaning.”

Addfwyn. “ With your leave, my honoured Teacher, I have one thing to observe; and a thing it is of great importance. I think, *Deddfol* does not believe the *Deity* of the Lord Jesus. This the Spirit of God calls — *a damnable heresy!* In his letter *Deddfol* says, That Christ is a person great above angels and men; which, as it stands in that letter, implies a denial of his eternal Deity. He is here present; and I humbly move, that he may be called to speak plainly to that important article.”

Dewi. “ An important article indeed! Take away Christ’s Divine Nature, and our faith is left without a foundation; * for we dare trust in none — but

* Of all the important doctrines contained in the New Testament, that are *worthy of all acceptance*, not one, perhaps, is more important, or more capable of solid proof, than this — “*Our Saviour Jesus Christ is the true God.*” (1 John v. 20.) Nor is it difficult to demonstrate, if Jesus Christ be *not* the true God, of the same essence with his Father — That a modern Jew, or a Mahometan, is a far more consistent character than a Christian.

“ but the Lord JEHOVAH, in whom is everlasting
 “ strength. In the scriptures of truth, the Divine
 “ Nature of our Redeemer is plainly and frequently
 “ asserted. Hear the testimony of the *Father*:
 “ ‘Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!’
 “ Hear his *Own* testimony: ‘Before *Abraham* was
 “ I AM.’ Again: ‘I and my Father are ONE.’
 “ And again: ‘I am the first and the last.’ Hear
 “ the testimony of the *Spirit*: ‘In the beginning
 “ was the Word—and the Word was GOD.’ Again:
 “ ‘Without controversy great is the mystery of
 “ godliness; GOD was manifest in the flesh.’ And
 “ again: ‘This is the TRUE GOD and eternal
 “ life.’ Hear the testimony of *Angels*: ‘Holy,
 “ holy, holy is the LORD OF HOSTS, the whole
 “ earth is full of his glory.’ Again: ‘And I be-
 “ held,

Christian—“ That the *Mahometan* religion is preferable to the
 “ *Christian* religion, and *Jesus Christ* inferior to *Mahomet*—
 “ That the *Sanhedrim* did an act of justice in causing him
 “ to be put to death, and the Jews had sufficient reason to re-
 “ ject the preaching of his Apostles, when they called them to
 “ believe on him—That He and his Apostles have led us into
 “ a complicated and pernicious error—That there is no suffi-
 “ ent harmony between the Prophets and the Apostles, or between
 “ the Old Testament and the New—And, finally, if *Jesus Christ*
 “ be *not* the true God, neither the ancient *Jewish*, nor the
 “ *Christian* religion is attended with sufficient criteria to dis-
 “ tinguish it from imposture.” These are the *horrid* but *genuine*
 “ consequences of the *Socinian* and *Arian* Hypotheses! But if the
 “ reader would wish to see them *unanswerably demonstrated* to be
 “ such, let him consult that masterly piece, entitled, *The Deity of*
 “ *Jesus Christ essential to the Christian Religion*; written originally in
 “ *French*, by Dr. ABBADIE: The *English* Translation revised and
 “ republished, by the Rev. Mr. BOOTH.

“ held, and I heard the voice of many Angels
“ round about the throne, and the Beasts and the
“ Elders; and the number of them was ten thou-
“ sand times ten thousand and thousands of thou-
“ sands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the
“ Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches
“ and wisdom and strength and honour and glory
“ and blessing. And every creature which is in
“ heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth,
“ and such as are in the sea, and all that are in
“ them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour and
“ glory and power be unto him that sitteth on
“ the throne, and unto the LAMB for ever and
“ ever.’ It would be endless to enumerate the tes-
“ timonies of the *church militant*—of old and new
“ Testament *Saints*.”

“ As my brother *Yefan* said on another occasion,
“ I will say upon this; What, *Deddfol*, deny all
“ this, and profess to be a christian!”

Deddfol. Sir, I am very well persuaded, that
Christ is truly great and glorious, beyond any thing
that I can express. None among the sons of the
mighty can be compared to him. Angels and
Principalities are under his feet. Whatever may be
esteemed powerful, grand or glorious in this world,
must be looked upon as the small drop of a
bucket, or the small dust of a balance, in com-
parison of him. And were the shining worlds above
us, of magnitude immense, filled with inhabitants
of superior glory, (as for ought I know they may
be) Christ would be still unspeakably above them.
Should we further imagine millions of worlds a
thousand times more magnificent than any thing
that

that hath entered our thoughts, they must not only be in subjection to him, but be reckoned as nothing compared with him. It is true, the Angels of light must be creatures glorious and potent, but none among those morning stars like the Sun of righteousness. *He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.* His nature, whatever it be, is *superangelic*; and, as he is *above* Angels, so he was *before* them all.* In short, we may grant him any glory but that of an infinite, eternal, underived and independent Being. It is impossible that of *such* there should be more than *one*. Great and glorious as he is, he must have a beginning.

Yefan. "This is plain (much plainer than common) but very shocking. You say, 'That great as he is, he must have a *beginning*.' Then, I pray, how can you receive what is said of him, 'That all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made?' And they were made *for* him, as well as *by* him."

Deddfol. Reason is an eternal rule, whereby all scripture must be interpreted. My reason tells me, and so must your's, That there can be but one underived Being.

Yefan. "And so does revelation. But this infinite, eternal, underived Being, who knows himself, tells us, That in his ONE ESSENCE, or Being, there are THREE, the Father, the Word, and

* THIS is a just specimen of many pulpit declamations in the present day; which, indeed, are very well calculated to dazzle and beguile the unwary, though, at the same time, such concessions may perfectly consist with a *determined opposition* to the *proper Deity* of Jesus Christ.

“ and the Holy Spirit; —and, that these THREE are
 “ ONE. (h) What though your reason, bright as it
 “ is, cannot comprehend this; is it not highly reason-
 “ able you should believe the account God gives
 “ of himself?”

Deddfol. But Christ is called the Father’s ser-
 vant: And he himself says, *My Father is greater*
than I.

Yefan. “ As Mediator, in our nature, it is even
 “ so; but according to his divine nature there can
 “ be no inequality.”

Deddfol. Why, how many natures must he have?

Yefan. “ Two distinct natures, the divine and
 “ human.”

Deddfol. Then he is two persons.

Yefan. “ He assumed not a human person, but
 “ a human nature, which never subsisted seperately
 “ from the divine.” *

Deddfol. These things are all *mysteries.*

Yefan. “ And so they should be: For, *without*
 “ *controversy great is the MYSTERY of godliness,*
 “ *God manifest in the flesh.* (i) Many things above
 “ our reason, may yet be very reasonable: And
 “ assure yourself, that nothing can be more *unrea-*
 “ *sonable* than to reject a *divine testimony* — *The*
 “ *just shall live by FAITH.*”

Gruffydd. “ With your leave, my honoured Pastor,
 “ it appears to me that *Deddfol* is a very great
 “ stranger

(h) 1 John v. 7, 8.

* SEE on this important subject, that justly celebrated and
 very valuable treatise, by Dr. OWEN, entitled, *A Declaration of*
the glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ, God and Man. Chap. xviii.

(i) 1 Tim. iii. 16.

“ stranger to that *life of faith*. Does the man who
“ asserts justification by *works*, live by *faith*? Does
“ the man who denies the *satisfaction* of Christ,
“ live by *faith*? Does the man who denies the
“ *divine nature* of our Redeemer live by *faith*?”

Dewi. “ As yet, *Deddfol*, you stand related to
“ us in visible church-membership; but had you
“ at first discovered such principles as you now
“ profess, we should have thought it our duty to
“ shut the door against you. But, seeing you are
“ called a *brother*, I hope we shall be enabled to
“ discharge that duty, which we owe to our Lord,
“ to you, and to ourselves. In the confession you
“ made upon admission among us, you owned the
“ principles you now deny. And for a considerable
“ time we know you were wont to express abun-
“ dant satisfaction in the doctrine you heard, and
“ seemed to admire grace, that you were fixed in
“ fellowship with the saints. — Where is, now,
“ that *blessedness* you spoke of? Where is that
“ *faith* in Christ you professed? Where is that
“ *love* to the church and it’s peace? — I am your
“ grieved Pastor, and as such, with my fellow-
“ elders, do rebuke and reprove you, that you may
“ be found in the faith. — We charge you with
“ holding pernicious errors, inconsistent with real
“ christianity; and call upon you to *repent* and
“ *believe* in Christ. If ever you had any real ac-
“ quaintance with him, I am certain you have
“ deeply revolted from him. May you no longer
“ dishonour him and distress his church!”

Christophilus.

Christophilus. Well, though they were distressed, they were helped to discharge their duty: And therefore were in the way to glorify Christ.

Epenetus. You must look upon the account I gave, only as the sum and substance of what passed; but they were very particular and close. Oh, it was a very establishing day to all the godly that were present! When their reasoning with *Deddfol* was over, *Dewi*, with many tears, concluded the opportunity in prayer.

Theophilus. Pray, *Epenetus*, what was the end of *Deddfol's* affair?

Epenetus. The very next week they dealt in a similar manner with *Digyfraith*, and their endeavours with him were also attended with very little success; whereupon they thought it expedient to acquaint the church: And, after earnest prayer to God, they all unanimously resolved to send letters to sister churches, to solicit their assistance.

Neophytus. O, dear *Epenetus*, favour us with a particular account.

Epenetus. At another opportunity, if you please. You see, now, our time is gone, and duties at home call for us.

Philaethes. When we hear of persons forsaking the truth, what reason have we, who through grace stand, to take heed lest we fall, and be led away with the error of the wicked! What cause have we to cry to him continually, *Send forth thy light and thy truth, let them lead us, let them bring us unto thy holy hill!*

DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE X.

Digyfraith is dealt with in the same manner. Denies the commanding power of the law of God. Is against confessing and mourning for sin. Is sharply reprov'd. The case of both laid before the church. A messenger's meeting is agreed upon. A letter sent to Llettyrdŵr on this occasion. Some account of that meeting. The advice given, to deal with them as Hereticks. What Heresy is. The communion of churches considered. A letter of dismissal. The comfortable death of Didwyll. The conclusion.

NEOPHYTUS.

COME, beloved *Epenetus*, I hope we shall now be favoured with some account of that other troublesome man; I think you called him *Digyfraith*: Pray, what methods did the church at *Caerludd* take with him?

Epenetus. The following week, on an appointed day (as I hinted before) they dealt with him in a very particular manner. The leading circumstances of their proceedings I shall now give you.—The *Elders* and several *brethren* being come, *Dewi*, in
an

an humble affectionate manner, committed to God, in prayer, the important concerns of the day.—Then *Tefan* spoke as follows:

Tefan “ My dear brethren: What an unspeak-
 “ able mercy it is, that we have the written word
 “ to have recourse to, on all occasions! It is in-
 “ deed a light that shines in a dark place, where-
 “ unto we do well to take heed. We have met
 “ with some trials which at first we did not expect;
 “ and wondered what might be the use designed
 “ for the prepared armour! But since then we have
 “ had reason to own the wisdom of our God in
 “ preparing it. There is no part of it superfluous,
 “ nor is there any necessary piece unprovided; for
 “ our *backs* we must never turn to the adversary.
 “ —Blessed be God for the helmet, the breast-
 “ plate, the sword and the shield, and all the rest!
 “ And blessed be God that hitherto we have been
 “ helped to stand in an evil day! The Captain of
 “ our salvation, dear brethren, is with us, and the
 “ shout of a King is among us; and he that did
 “ deliver, and doth deliver, we trust, will still
 “ deliver us. Awful was Satan’s attempt by
 “ *Deddfol*, against the *Person*, *work*, and *grace*
 “ of Christ: And, if duly considered, no less aw-
 “ ful is the attempt he makes by *Digyfraith*, here
 “ present. His letter to *Hygar* contains many dan-
 “ gerous errors; which letter I shall now distinctly
 “ and deliberately read, that you may the better
 “ form a judgment thereupon.— *Reads it* —
 “ It is really very shocking to see so many im-
 “ portant truths abused, and so many pernicious
 “ principles crouded together, in so few lines.—

S

“ *Digyfraith*.

" *Digyfraith*, does this letter contain your present judgment?"

Digyfraith. Sir, it does: And I wonder that you, whom I have heard so often exalt the grace of God, should ever say, that it contains pernicious errors; since my letter is nothing but a consistent testimony for free-grace.

Yefan. "How consistent a testimony it is for free-grace, may be considered before we have done. In the mean time, I charge you most solemnly with a down right opposition to all the grace of Christ."

Digyfraith. Sir, I wonder this should be charged upon me as a crime, seeing we are saved by grace!

Yefan. "But that grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teaches persons to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world. (k) So this grace of God makes it necessary, that ministers should explain what ungodliness and worldly lusts are, that they may be avoided; and what duties belong to sobriety, righteousness and godliness, that they may be practised."

Digyfraith. As I said before, I love to hear of grace. All my happiness is of grace; and if of grace, it is no more of works: Duties are works; and though I do not care to be noisy and troublesome, yet to tell you the truth I do not love to hear of them. When I have been comforted in hearing the doctrine of grace, I have often, before the discourse was finished, been half slain in hearing duties mentioned. Oh, it is the sound

of

(k) Tit. ii. 12.

of *grace* that refreshes me, and I must again say, I love nothing else.

Yesan. “What sort of *refreshment* your’s is, I
“know not; nor do I desire that acquaintance with
“*grace*, which excludes and despises duties. I look
“upon every duty as a special *mercy* from God to
“my soul; and the more I am acquainted with
“God, as the God of all *grace*, the more I am
“led to delight in every duty towards him. I
“delight in his law after the inner man, and find
“that in keeping his commandments there is a
“great reward. There is a glorious *connection* be-
“tween *grace* and duties; but you seem to separate
“what God hath put together, and profess your
“delight only in the word *grace*.”

Christophilus. You bring to my mind an opportunity I once had, of hearing a certain person preach from that text — *For by grace are ye saved* — and the word *grace* occurred, perhaps, a hundred times in his sermon. He told us, That it was *grace* that put the Father and Son upon entering into a covenant of redemption, in order to bring fallen man into a *salvable* state — that it was wonderful *grace* in God, that he should for the sake of unworthy sinners, *relax* the rigour of his law — and condescending *grace*, altogether amazing, that God should freely offer to enter into a covenant of *grace* with *man*! — and *grace* indeed, that the *terms* thereof should be so mild and moderate, to be fulfilled also by his gracious help — and, notwithstanding those small, impropportionate performances, continued in, an eternal weight of glory. Behold, said he, the *grace* of all this! — An honest christian that

seemed to be greatly affected with the discourse, and walking from thence along with me, said, Well, this is free-grace indeed! I was greatly *pleased* to hear this joyful sound. I told him, that I hoped *he* was a lover of the grace of God in *truth*, and that all *my* dependance was also upon grace: Then told him how and why I was greatly *displeased* with the discourse.

Theophilus. And once I heard a minister preach from those words, — *Created in Christ Jesus unto good works* — words just by those you mentioned. He insisted on the *nature* of good works; from whence they *sprung*, and whither they *tended*: Together with the *necessity* and *usefulness* of them: And greatly pleased and refreshed I was to hear him. But there was an honest acquaintance of mine there, who seemed to hear with uneasiness; and when the opportunity was over, he came and told me, that he believed the man was a *free-willer*, and for justification by *works*. I told him, I was very sorry he thought so; and endeavoured to convince him, that it was a precious *free-grace* sermon, though the *word* free-grace was never once mentioned in it.

Philaletes. Poor christians under such *weaknesses* are greatly to be pitied and prayed for. But I am afraid the person of whom *Epenetus* speaks, was more *wicked* than weak, as appears from other things in his letter. — But we have interrupted the story.

Epenetus. However, upon *Tesan's* saying, that he seemed to separate what God had joined, and to please himself with only the word *grace*; he replied — And with submission be it spoken, you seem

seem to join what God hath for ever seperated; namely, grace and works, the believer and sin.

Yefan. "When you can shew me a person truly acquainted with the grace of God, averse to good works, or without a heart for them: Or when you can shew me a believer who hath no sin be- longing to him, what you say shall be considered."

Digyfraith. Sir, I hope you see your humble servant. True acquaintance with grace I have, works are with me of no value: A believer I am, nor have I any sin belonging to me. God himself, who can no otherwise than see every thing, says, that he sees none; and though sought by him, he finds none.

Yefan. "The scripture informs me, that with- out shewing your good works, you can never prove that you are a partaker of true grace: And it is very strange, that God can see no sin in you when I a poor worm, that can see but little, can observe it."

Digyfraith. You see through a *false medium*, which deceives your sight: And you may depend upon it that it is so, because the scripture says — *He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath seen perverseness in Israel: (1)* Therefore to be sure there is none, else he would have seen it.

Yefan. "Iniquity and *perverseness*, idolatry and villainy reigned, and cruelly tyrannized, over the Moabites; but God was Israel's King. And his law was to the tribes a rule of walk and wor- ship, whereby iniquity and perverseness were neither tolerated, nor at that time embraced."

S 3

Digyfraith.

(1) *Numb. xxiii, 21.*

Digyfraith. But the sins of believers are not seen; for, according to the scriptures, they are blotted out and covered.

Yefan. "And, according to the scriptures, they
 "are seen too — 'Against thee have I sinned, and
 "done this evil *in thy sight.*' (m) I grant there
 "is a sense wherein it may be said, that God does
 "not see the sins of his people: It is said, if
 "God should *mark* iniquity no person could stand;
 "but there is forgiveness with him. The iniquity
 "that is forgiven is not marked, is not *seen*;
 "that is, with the eye of his *vindictive justice*:
 "But to the eye of his *providence* all things are
 "open and naked. Our most secret thoughts are
 "constantly under his view; and he can as well
 "cease to be God, as properly to forget any one
 "of our innumerable evils."

Digyfraith. - Well, this is language I like not, nor do I know who can like it and live. What! God see sin in me! It is cutting, it is killing, take it in any sense.

Yefan. "I fear, for all your confidence, you see
 "some things in yourself that you are not willing
 "God should see; and that a *guilty heart* lies at
 "the bottom of this principle of your's, else you
 "would, no doubt, with humility and gladness,
 "embrace the truth I contend for."

Digyfraith. Whatever might be called 'my sin,' was laid on Christ, became his, and ceased to be mine; and therefore God himself, who is omniscient, cannot see them as *my* sins.

Yefan.

(m) *Psaln* li. 4.

Yefan. "It is very well known, that I look up-
 " on the doctrine of imputation of sin to Christ,
 " and the imputation of righteousness to his
 " people, as the glory of my life and work. But
 " though it is said, that 'the Lord laid upon him
 " the iniquity of us all,' yet it was *we* went
 " astray, and it was *our* iniquity. The judgment
 " of God is always according to truth; and there-
 " fore he must know that Christ never sinned,
 " though our sins were imputed to him. God
 " must know that *we* are the very transgressors,
 " even when he does not impute our trespasses un-
 " to us. Though Christ *bore* our sins in his own
 " body on the tree, yet they were *our* sins. And
 " are we not daily to confess them *as our* sins,
 " and mourn over them before the Lord?"

UPON this, *Diwyd* said, "My honoured Teacher,
 " give me leave to observe, that in our private meet-
 " ings *Digyfraith* was frequently called upon to pray;
 " and, though I gave all possible attention, I never
 " heard him confess sin, or mourn over it before
 " the Lord. He had indeed many good expressions
 " in his prayers, but for the most part he seemed
 " to be preaching rather than praying; addressing
 " the people rather than God. He would some-
 " times shew great indignation against thoughts dis-
 " ferent from his own, and complain of *other*
 " people's darkness and legality; but, in all my
 " acquaintance with him, I never heard him con-
 " fess his *own* corruption, bewail his *own* imper-
 " fection, or beg evangelical repentance. And let
 " any one tell me he ever saw him shed tears in
 " mourning over sin before God; and I can pro-

“duce the man who saw him *smile* at a tender
 “confession of sin, and heard him deride a weep-
 “ing christian as a weak insignificant soul — blest
 “with a moist brain.”

Digyfraith. I do not know with what view I
 am thus accused, nor do I much care. I remember
 the time when I was so weak as to confess and
 mourn; but *then* I knew no better. I find a sort
 of pity to poor creatures, who seem to take plea-
 sure in crying, complaining, and confessing, as if
 there was a great deal of christianity in it: But,
 for my own part, I have forsaken my bondage;
 and, being called to liberty, would stand fast therein.
 — It is something odd, that a christian of my
 growth should be called to account by those of a
 low stature, who cannot see as I do. I bear with
 you as well as I can, though your confessions and
 contritions are a burden to me; but you, like fret-
 ful children, cannot bear with me, who would fain
 bring you on towards manhood in religion.

Tefan. “Were you to measure yourself by the
 “sacred word, you would not, I presume, have
 “those high thoughts of your attainments. The
 “rule given us there, is, ‘that we should esteem
 “others better than ourselves:’ (n) And this the
 “apostle *Paul* eminently exemplified when he said,
 “that he was ‘less than the least of all saints.’
 “(o) And thus the beloved disciple declares —
 “‘If we *confess* our sins, He is faithful and just
 “to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from
 “all unrighteousness — if we say we *have no sin*,
 “we

(n) *Phil.* ii. 3.

(o) *Eph.* iii. 8.

“ we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”
“ (p) How differently minded from you was this
“ apostle? — Another apostle says, ‘ that in many
“ things we offend all:’ And, for all your haste,
“ you are one of those *offenders*, and eminent as
“ you fancy yourself, it would not be beneath you
“ to acknowledge it.”

Neophytus. Well, was not this a little too tart;
might not a more *respectful* way of speaking proba-
bly answer a better end?

Theophilus. No truly, my dear friend. You are
not much acquainted, perhaps, with persons of those
principles: Speak respectfully to them, and they
will quickly boast, that it is upon a full convic-
tion of their excellency you do so. I have had oc-
casion more than once to know the truth of this.
They should be reprov'd sharply, as persons vainly
puffed up in their fleshly mind.

Christophilus. My dear *Neophytus*, it will be your
mercy to be unacquainted with such persons to the
end of your days. The apostles, *Peter* and *Jude*,
give a very distinct account of them. They speak
big swelling words, and talk much of grace; —
but you must take their *words* for it: For, if
Barnabas were to visit them, *see* the grace of God
he could not. Many of them deceive with fair
speeches; but may you, and all who value a ten-
der conscience, be enabled to stand on the strictest
guard against them. But, dear *Epenetus*, excuse us,

Epenetus. Having been numbered, as I told you,
among the offenders, he cries out — In the name
of wonder and astonishment, who and what do I
offend!

P 5

(P) 1 John i. 8,

offend! I do assure you that I offend not my *conscience*. If you say that I give *you* offence; pray why should you be offended at what works together for your good? If you say that *God* is offended, you will find yourselves greatly mistaken; for he says "that I am all fair, and have no spot."

Yefan. "In the first place, I tremble to hear
 " you say, that you offend not your own *conscience*!
 " Were not your conscience a stifled or a seared
 " one, it would fly in your face at every expression
 " you delivered. You have indeed offended *us*,
 " and given us trouble, and we know that this
 " trouble shall be turned to our good: But are
 " your vile opinions and practices therefore harm-
 " less? The selling of *Joseph* was a vile and bar-
 " barous action, yet God meant it for good: But
 " did God's gracious design make that base act of
 " his brethren sinless? The fall of *Adam* was by
 " almighty grace over-ruled for good, but our sal-
 " vation did not spring out of that fall. Though
 " God over-rules and subdues our corruptions, and
 " by his Spirit works in us repentance and humi-
 " liation for them, yet nothing of this, properly
 " speaking, springs out of sin. Yes—the highest
 " character this can claim is, 'that it is *exceeding*
 " *sinful*.' As for God's saying to his church,
 " 'Thou art all fair, there is no spot in thee,'
 " I do assure you that, at present, it intends not
 " you. But how base is your insinuation, that what
 " we call sin, hath no malignity in its nature."

Diggswraith. Why, Sir, is not the *sting* of death gone? Is not the *curse* of the law gone? And, pray, are we any more *under* the law? And was not

not the law the *strength* of sin? And if the strength of sin is gone, is not the *malignity* thereof removed? Besides, how can there be any malignity in what is *for our sakes*? For all things are for our sakes, and therefore this. For my part I am willing to believe, that He who gave us the victory over the law, made an *end* of sin: At least so far as that it can do no hurt.

Didwyl. “ Oh, my dear brethren, what language is this! Is it possible for a christian to hear it without trembling and astonishment! This is the man of light, the man of high stature, the christian of growth! And is it for *this* he values himself so highly! May all who fear God, avoid him and his impious principles! What no malignity in sin! It is directly opposite to the holy nature of God; and is there no harm in it? O monstrous! The Holy Spirit, by the apostle, calls sinful lusts, *hurtful*; but according to this man, they are *harmless*. By what spirit must he speak? The Lord says, do not that abominable thing which my soul hateth; but this man says, It is for our sakes, or it has a *good* tendency.”

Digyfraith. When I say that sin works for good, I use the word *sin* in conformity to the language of the times; and I understand thereby those actions you term sinful. But if things, in such a light as I enjoy, were strictly considered, among us believers there can be no sin; for we are not under the law. Now it is evident, that where there is no law, there can be no transgression. Christ redeemed us from under the law, and we are dead

to it: We have nothing to do with it, nor hath it any thing to say to us.

Yefau. "It is certain that we are, through grace, delivered from the law as a covenant of works, and Christ hath removed the curse of it from his people; but by this grace the law is not made void, but established, as a rule of life. Therefore the apostle says, that he was not without law to God, but under the law to Christ. And the same apostle says, that real religion lies in 'keeping the commandments of God.' (q) — The Spirit of God gave this command to a gospel minister, 'Those who sin, rebuke before all.' And I do in his name here rebuke you as a notorious, wilful, deliberate sinner. Love to iniquity, affectation of singularity, haughtiness of mind, with a desire to be eminent at any rate, are the cords wherewith you are bound: And though you promise to yourself liberty, I do assure you that you are very much like a servant of corruption."

Neophytus. Well, how could he stand under such close reproofs?

Christophilus. Alas! my dear *Neophytus*, such people are proof against all. Darts are counted by them as stubble, and they laugh at the shaking of a spear. When once they work themselves to this, that the law of God says nothing to them, what reproofs, what rebukes can affect them?

Theophilus. A certain teacher told me to my very face, that God requires nothing of his people but what he enables them to perform; and pray, *Neophytus,*

phytus, where then is place for reproof? And the very same person publickly said, that we are not under the *commanding* power of the law, which must intend that the law says nothing to us; and if so, there can be neither sin nor obedience.

Syllogisticus. Yes — grant it to be a truth, that God requires nothing of us but what He enables us to perform, or, that we are not under the *commanding* power of the law, and I will dare promise to defend and maintain all the vile notions of this man.

Epanetus. Upon the close reproof that was given, *Digyfraith* says, Sir, though I am delivered from the *commanding* power of any divine law, yet by a law which *you* profess to be under, you must be esteemed a transgressor. Why judgest thou thy brother; or why settest thou at nought thy brother? I think you judge and condemn me.

Gruffydd. “ That is your mistake. Our honour-
“ ed *Teacher*, to whom you should have shewn more
“ respect, did neither condemn nor judge you. With
“ your *state* he meddles not, but with your corrupt,
“ pernicious principles.—If *Deddfol*, who also gives
“ us a great deal of trouble, denies our great God
“ and *Saviour*; you will not allow him to be your
“ *Lord*; for laws you will allow him none. And
“ even faith itself, which the *law of God* requires,
“ is, according to your principles, no *duty* of your’s
“ —If principles of a more dreadful consequence
“ can be gathered out of the blackness of dark-
“ ness, I am greatly mistaken.”

Addfwyn. “ It is our duty and glory, doubtless,
“ to shew tenderness and meekness towards all men;
“ but

“ but there appears so much ungodliness in the
 “ principles which *Digyfraith* maintains, that a
 “ church of Christ, zealously concerned for his glo-
 “ ry, cannot possibly bear with. — Can he be a
 “ christian, who, in the present imperfect state, sees
 “ no *sin* in himself? Who is an enemy to godly
 “ *mourning*, and asserts, that there is no *malignity*
 “ in sin? And who, with impious boldness, declares
 “ that the law of God says nothing to him? Can
 “ this be the language of a believer in the holy
 “ Redeemer? — For my part, I humbly think it is
 “ our immediate duty to call him, to unfeigned re-
 “ pentance.”

Dewi. “ Trials of this nature we did not in-
 “ deed expect, though it is written, that from a-
 “ mong ourselves men should arise, speaking *perverse*
 “ things.—*Digyfraith*, I here charge you with *hatred*
 “ against God, in denying his omniscience; while
 “ you deny that God sees your sin in any sense.
 “ Ah, poor creature! he knows your foolishness,
 “ and your sin is not hid from him. — I here also
 “ charge you with *impenitency*: You are puffed up,
 “ as the apostle says, and have not rather *mourned*.
 “ On him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit,
 “ who trembleth at God’s word, you set no value.
 “ However, as your case is very dangerous, I call
 “ you to mourning and repentance. — Moreover;
 “ I charge you with *love to iniquity*; for, with
 “ dreadful audacity, you affirm, that sin hath no
 “ malignity in it, but works for our good: Horrid
 “ language! which pleads for the evil of evils. —
 “ Once more; I here charge you with being too
 “ much like a child of *Belial*, without a yoke,
 “ with—

"without a law. This is the mother of all your
 "abominations. — I am as yet your *Pastor*, and
 "in the Lord's name, whom I serve, and under
 "whose law I own myself to be, do call you to
 "sincere repentance."

UPON this *Yefan* prayed with great humility and affection; confessing, and with many tears mourning over, those sins, which made way for such a trial. He earnestly desired their dear Lord to forgive all, and make them more watchful for the future, every one in his place. With great enlargedness, he implored the blessing of heaven on their endeavours, for the establishment of the faithful, and for the recovery of the erroneous; and begged that God would in great mercy direct them what further measures to take, as most for His glory and their comfort. So that meeting concluded.

Neophytus. Well, I am persuaded this man was an *Antinomian*! I did not imagine that the *primitive* churches were disturbed with persons of such principles: For I have read that the *Antinomian Sect* sprung up in *Germany*, in the time of *Luther*; and that one *John Agricola* * gave rise to it.

Philaletes.

* This *Saxon* divine was born at *Islebe*, in 1493. His popularity raised his conceit of himself, and made him imagine he could easily outstrip *Melancthon*; and accordingly wrote against him in 1527. — He was of a restless, ambitious temper, which made him quit his native country, where he was minister and principal of a college. He was reproached, particularly by Count *Mansfeld*, with ingratitude, avarice and drunkenness; and also accused of having exercised his function very negligently, and having disputed more against the *Protestants* than the *Catholics*. At *Wittenberg* he was chosen minister, and obtained a professorship.

Here

Philalethes. What! did you never read the epistle of *James*? Pray do not you find him contending with such people? They boasted they were believers, and works they did not value: He therefore calls them *vain* men, telling them, that the faith whereof they boasted was a *dead* faith. — Have you never read the second epistle of *Peter*? Does he not tell the christians, that there were persons among them, who were spots and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, even while they feasted with them? And who, though they spoke great swelling words of vanity, and promised *liberty* to their deluded admirers, yet did they not cease from sin, but were the servants of corruption. — And, pray, have you not read the epistle of *Jude*? Does he not speak of persons, whom he compares to “clouds without water,” and “trees without fruit,” and yet their mouth speaketh great swelling words? — I do assure you they were the *Antinomians* of that day.

Neophytus. My dear *Philalethes*, I return you thanks: May I be for ever delivered from such persons and principles!

Theophilus.

Here he taught several new doctrines concerning *the use of the law under the gospel*; and he became founder of the sect of *Antinomians*. *Luther*, who had once been his very good friend, procured from him, after many evasions, and circumstances not much to his honour, a recantation of his errors, in a book he published at *Berlin*; wherein he asks pardon of such as he had offended by his errors, especially of *Luther*; and protests, that he is desirous to live and die in that faith which he had attacked. And afterwards he assured the Elector of *Saxony*, that nothing had given him more uneasiness than the contest he had had with that man of God.

Theophilus. If you think it expedient at any time, my dear *Neophytus*, to prove any person upon this point, bring him to the law, the eternal moral law of God, summarily comprehended in the ten commandments; and ask him, Does he look upon that law of God as the *rule* of his life? If he *denies* it, avoid him. If he answers with *reserves* and evasions, avoid him. If he says, that it is a good rule, but a *passive* one, that says nothing to him, still avoid him. If he says, that he is not under the *commanding* power of it, turn away from him. But if he says, that he sincerely takes it as God's *revealed will* to him, owning its authority over his conscience and conversation; if he appears to breathe after universal obedience thereto, repenting and mourning where he falls short, and ever fleeing to CHRIST for peace and pardon—embrace him for a friend and a companion.

Christophilus. When I see persons weary of the good old distinction between the law as a *covenant*, and the law as a *rule*, and that Christ hath delivered us from under it in the *former* sense, but established it as a rule in the *latter*;* I say, when I see persons quibbling upon this, and loath to receive it, I always suspect them.

Neophytus. My dear friends, I return you all many thanks: But, dear *Epenetus*, how did they farther deal with those men at *Caerludd*?

Epenetus. As I told you before, the account I have given is but short and imperfect. But they
reasoned

* See on this subject a very judicious and practical treatise, entitled, *The death of legal hope, the life of evangelical obedience*, by the Rev. Mr. BOOTH.

reasoned with much enlargement and zeal: And the substance of the debate was taken down by ready writers. The very next church meeting, after strong cries and supplications to the Lord for wisdom and faithfulness, the sum and substance of all was laid before the church. — They mourned much under the weight of this trial, and, upon deliberate consultation, resolved to write letters to all the churches within their acquaintance; earnestly desiring they would send their *messengers* to be present with them on such a day, to consult with them before the Lord on these important affairs, and give their advice.

Philaethes. A remarkable pattern for this part of the communion of churches, is recorded in the new Testament. (*Acts* xv.) The church at *Antioch*, pestered with a dangerous doctrine, which produced no small dissention, sent *Messengers* to the church at *Jerusalem*, who were properly received: The whole church at *Jerusalem* sent *Messengers* back again to them, with an *epistle* to the brethren, which, when the *multitude* of them came together, was delivered and read. Nor was the question decided by extraordinary apostolical power only.

Neophytus. But would it not have been as well for the *Elders* only to have sent to other *Ministers*, and beg their kind assistance on such a time, without sending from the *church* to the *churches*? Is not a wise man as capable of giving advice when he is not a messenger as when he is? For, his being sent cannot add to his abilities.

Syllogisticus. You do not know that. — Have you never read, that when people's worship is taught

taught by the precepts of men, God would proceed to do a marvellous work amongst them; — the wisdom of their wise men should perish, and the understanding of the prudent should be hid? When men are out of God's way, their wisdom may perish. When they have rejected the word of the Lord, pray, what wisdom is in them?

Neophytus. But may there not be *ministers'* meetings, which some people call *synods* or *associations*; and may they not meet without being sent as *messengers* from the churches?

Theophilus. Yes, doubtless, and to a very good purpose, if well improved. Christian acquaintance, love and usefulness, may thereby be promoted. Only such meetings must be looked upon as *discretionary*, not of divine appointment.

Neophytus. And may not the churches ask their advice in any difficult cases?

Theophilus. Doubtless: But if the church does not state the case, and officially send its *messengers*, then that work must be looked upon only as a private friendly consultation; which, it must be owned, may have its good consequences; — but in all difficult cases the *primitive* way should have the preference.

Neophytus. But is the *advice* given according to this primitive way, of a *binding* nature, so that a church must submit to it, or sin against God?

Theophilus. The church, to which the *advice* is given, should be thankful to their Redeemer for the love and communion of his churches; but if any thing therein appears to them contrary to the *revealed will* of their Lord Jesus, they are not bound to submit thereto.

Neophytus.

Neophytus. Then, to what purpose is it to consult them at all, unless the advice be attended with a binding authority?

Theophilus. Why truly, my young friend, many of God's servants, in God's way, may discover some part of the divine pleasure out of the scriptures, which a few, and those, perhaps under disadvantages, could not see: But the binding authority stands only in — *Thus saith the Lord.* Authority over brethren grows apace in the soil of corrupt nature. It is a vile weed that fills the world. But what a pity it should be suffered to grow in gardens!

Neophytus. My excellent *Theophilus*, I hope you do not think that I aspire after any such power: You will excuse my putting the question for information. However, authority there must be in churches, else they could not deal with offending members.

Theophilus. Only the authority of *Christ*, and that for edification, and not for destruction.

Neophytus. All synods and councils pretend thereto.

Theophilus. But a congregational church of *Christ* can shew its commission, and produce the rules it hath to act by. *

Neophytus. Dear *Epenetus*, excuse me: Now, with the consent of my seniors, I beg to be favoured with the contents of one of the letters you mentioned, which were sent to the churches for messengers.

Epenetus. You may remember, that not long since I gave you some account of the grace of God in reaching several of the inhabitants of *Llettydrôr*, now called *Bedford*: And now I must observe, that the

* See Dialogue i. page 8, &c.

the work of the Redeemer's kingdom quickly prospered there into a flourishing church. To this church among others, a letter was sent as follows:

*" The church of Christ meeting for publick worship
 " near Dwrborrh in Caerludd, to the church of
 " Christ sojourning at Llettyrdŵr, wisheth all grace
 " and peace.*

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD,

" FREQUENTLY, with the tenderest affection, do
 " we bless the Lord for delivering you from the
 " power of darkness, and translating you into the
 " kingdom of his dear son; and with holy admiration do we reflect upon the means he made
 " use of to bring about so glorious a work! —
 " Our earnest desire is, dearly beloved, that you
 " may be very strong in the grace that is in Christ
 " Jesus; —that your love to the truth and to each
 " other may abound; —that your walk before the
 " Lord may be very humble and holy; — that
 " your communion and fellowship may be eminently
 " spiritual and refreshing; — that your testimony for Christ may be bright, consistent and
 " successful; — and that in every sense you may increase with the increase of God. — As to ourselves, uncommon trials at present attend us;
 " whereof we think it our duty thus to acquaint
 " you. There are two persons who are members
 " of us, that give us a great deal of trouble; one
 " denies the Godhead and grace of Christ, the
 " other renounces the law of God, the Redeemer's
 " dominion, and our duty. We have through grace
 " faithfully endeavoured their recovery out of the
 " snares

“ snares of Satan; but to our grief *there* they are
 “ still held. We have great reason of thankfulness,
 “ that the infection spreads not; and we think it
 “ still our duty to use all possible means for deli-
 “ vering the deceived from the error of their way.
 “ After supplications before the Lord, and consul-
 “ tations among ourselves, we have resolved to call
 “ other churches to assist us by their *messengers*;
 “ that in the presence of our Redeemer we may con-
 “ sult together, and act for his glory according to
 “ the best advice. — For this most solemn work,
 “ we have fixed upon the *tenth day* of the *third*
 “ *month*, and the day following if need be; and
 “ do hereby desire you, dearly beloved, to send
 “ your *messengers* to meet those of other churches
 “ with us on the appointed day, for our assistance.
 “ We hope the fulness of the blessing of the gos-
 “ pel of Christ shall attend us, who are

“ *Your affectionate, afflicted brethren.*”

“ *At our church-meeting the 7th*

“ *day of the first month.*”

LETTERS to the same purpose were sent to other churches: And poor *Cyndyn*, of whom you have heard before, desired he might be the messenger to carry this.

Christophilus. Ah poor heart! he wanted to see his dear friends, to whom he was made so useful in the day of his distress! And how welcome must he be to them!

Neophytus. Pray, *Christophilus*, suffer *Epenetus* to proceed to the account of that meeting.

Epenetus,

Epenetus. The time quickly came, and all the country messengers were there a day or two before hand; and among them was honest *Ffyddlon*, now very far in years, appearing ripe for heaven. He had not been at *Caerludd* for several years, but was now received with the greatest respect, and many tears of joy.

Christophilus. O! this was affecting, to see *Ffyddlon* once again, who was their father in Christ! How pleasant must it be to them to relate and hear over again, the story of the precious work at *Hyfrydle*! And the wonders of grace at first at *Caerludd*!

Neophytus. Dear *Christophilus*, pray suffer *Epenetus* to proceed with the story of the messengers' meeting.

Epenetus. The time being come, *Deowi*, the Pastor of the church, began with prayer; and with great judgment and affection sent up strong cries to God for a special blessing on the design of the day, &c. Prayer being ended, all the Messengers of the several churches took their respective seats, and unanimously chose the beloved *Ffyddlon* as Moderator, *pro tempore*. A proper person was chosen to read over the minutes of this affair from its origin to its present state; and two proper scribes were appointed to take down the speeches, debates and resolutions of this christian Synod.

UPON this, *Yefan* read that text, (*Acts* xv. 6.) *And the Apostles and Elders came together for to consider of this matter.* After taking notice of the true nature of christian consultation, and of the wisdom and goodness of our Redeemer in appointing and commanding the use of it in cases of difficulty and common concern;—he gave them a brief account of the questions
and

and cases they were to consider;—and then wished them the special assistance of the spirit of Christ, and that they might be enabled faithfully to adhere to the written word. Whatever case or question they were to consider, was taken down by the scribes, and delivered to the *Moderator*.

THEN *Deddfol*, who was present and conveniently seated, was asked, Whether the letter, which together with the minutes of their past conference had been just read, was his, and whether the account was just? He answered, that the letter was his, and that he had nothing to object against the account. — Upon this each article was distinctly considered; every messenger giving his thoughts with as much perspicuity and order as he could, together with the reason, or scripture, or both, which prevailed with him so to judge: Nor did any one interrupt another, or speak twice to the same thing, without leave first obtained. And *Deddfol* also was never denied leave, upon asking the *Moderator*, to reply to any thing that was spoken by the Messengers, &c. until the *Moderator*, who always spoke last, had given his thoughts. Then immediately a new article was called, which was considered in the same manner. And thus they went through the whole that concerned *Deddfol*, and which took up the whole of that day. — *Yefan* concluded the opportunity in prayer, and notice was given to meet there again the next day at such an hour.

Neophytus. Well, I should be glad to hear what every one spoke, and what advice they gave the church in that man's affair.

Epenetus.

Epenetus. The *first* I do not think consistent with the design of my story, as it would take a great deal of time; but as to the *advice*, they all agreed that *Deddfol* was a stubborn and a perverse *heretick*, and that it was the duty of the church to admonish him, and upon non-repentance to cut him off; And to this the *Moderator* set his hand.

Neophytus. And how did they deal with the *other* man?

Epenetus. In the very same manner; and the *advice* was the same. — Then *Ffyddlon*, the Moderator, preached from these words (1 Cor. xi. 19.) *For there must be also HERESIES among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.* Upon this *Deddfol* and *Digyfraith* were both admonished by the whole church, in the presence of the Messengers. And after publick thanks were given to the Messengers, the meeting concluded with praise and prayer.

Neophytus. And pray how did this affair end?

Epenetus. I told you there were ready writers appointed to take down the whole faithfully. The sum and substance thereof was transcribed into several copies, that the messengers might take them home with them, and read them to their respective churches; and lodge the account with their Elders against a time of need. — As for the two erroneous persons, after a *second* admonition, they were *rejected* as *Hereticks*.

Neophytus. But seeing they were *moral* in their walk, what need was there of excommunication?

Philalethes. The church could never observe the laws of Christ without it; for the command is very

T

express,

express, that such should be *rejected* after a first and second admonition. (s) And again — From such *withdraw* thyself. (t)

Syllogisticus. A church of Christ is a religious community, and is bound by revelation and reason to attempt the preserving itself pure; and how is it possible to effect this, without taking heed lest any root of bitterness spring up and defile many? — You speak of *Hereticks* moral in their walk! Do you consider what you say? Could you judge that man moral, who *denies* the proper Divinity of Christ; and the standard of whose obedience is a *relaxed* law? Or, can you judge that man moral, who says that he is not under the commanding power of the moral law? Their doctrine is the doctrine of Devils; and to suffer them to *dwell* in a church of Christ is to *give place* to the devil. —

Neophytus. My knowledge, I own, is very superficial; for I very much question whether I know what a *Heretick* is.

Theophilus. According to *Peter*, (2 *Peter* ii. 1.) he is an *Heretick* who denies the Lord that bought him. He that denies the *Divine* nature of Christ; — he that denies the *human* nature of Christ; — he that denies the *unity* of both natures in one person; — he that denies the *grace*, or the *laws* of Christ, is a *Heretick*.

Philologus. According to the import of the word, a *Heretick* takes pleasure in a religion of his own *choosing* — *taking up* and propagating his private opinion, in opposition to the general profession of the church, and unsupported by God's word.

Neophytus.

(s) *Tit.* iii, 10.

(t) *1 Tim.* vi, 5.

Neophytus. But I am at a loss how to understand what the Apostle assigns as a reason, why a *Heretick* should be rejected: For he says, that such a man is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself. Pray, what is there in this *peculiar* to a *Heretick*?

Theophilus. Nothing at all — nor is it mentioned with any such view; but to shew, that though a *Heretick* may in other respects behave among men in a harmless manner; or, perhaps may seem to abound in good works and usefulness; yet he is as vile a transgressor as any other, and therefore, to be rejected. He is as much *subverted* as if he turned highwayman, and draws condemnation on himself as inevitably as any profligate transgressor whatever.

Neophytus. I thank you, my dear *Theophilus*: But I have one favour more to ask; pray are there not some other things that appertain to the *communion of churches*?

Theophilus. Yes, yes; such as the *occasional communion* of members, either upon letters of recommendation, or, if they are well known, without; — the *dismissal* of members, and the *reception* of them into full communion; — the giving and receiving *assistance* of a temporal nature, &c.

Neophytus. A letter of recommendation for transient, or occasional communion, must be, I suppose, a testimony from one church to another, concerning such a person; signifying that he is a church-member, and walks agreeably to his profession, &c. But what is a *dismissal*?

Theophilus. Pray, *Epenetus*, can you give him some account of one?

Epenetus. You may remember I gave you some account of one *Alfred*, a young man that belonged to the church at *Hyfrydle*, and who went up the first time with *Ffyddlon* to *Caerludd*, and staid there. This young man, after a while, desired his *dismissal*, which was granted as follows:

“ The church of Christ sojourning at Hyfrydle, to the
 “ church of Christ sojourning at Caerludd, and
 “ meeting for publick worship near Dwrborth, with
 “ their Bishops and Deacons; wishing all grace and
 “ peace.

“ DEARLY BELOVED IN OUR LORD,

“ IT hath been the good pleasure of the God of
 “ all grace, to bring you to himself, and form you
 “ a church according to his word: And it hath
 “ pleased him providentially to remove from hence
 “ to your neighbourhood, our beloved brother *Alfred*,
 “ who now desires to be dismissed from our fellow-
 “ ship to your’s. Seeing the all-wise God, who de-
 “ termines the bounds of our habitations, hath thus
 “ disposed of him, affording him a pleasant prof-
 “ pect of spiritual advantage in your fellowship;
 “ we think his request very reasonable, and look
 “ upon it our duty to grant it: Wherefore we do,
 “ as a church of Christ, now recommend and *dis-*
 “ *miss* our dear brother *Alfred*, whose conversation
 “ while with us was very honourable, to your fel-
 “ lowship in the Lord; declaring that when you
 “ receive him, his membership here ceaseth. We
 “ with

" with you and him a rich abundance of the re-
 " freshing joys of Christ, and in the most tender
 " christian affection remain

" *Your brethren in the best bonds,*

" *Ordered at our church-meeting,*

" *—such a day."*

Neophytus. And how was he received? Was he propounded? Did they depute persons to visit him, and enquire after his conversation? And was he called to speak his experience, &c.?

Epenetus. No — nothing of all this. Only the letter was read, and thereupon the church received him into fellowship.

Neophytus. Great usefulness, no doubt, attends the communion of churches: — But is there any such thing as the excommunication of a church?

Theophilus. No; there is no rule for that. — Churches are co-ordinate: Holding the head, they must be considered as true churches, and therefore in fellowship. If any are apprehended to be disordered, prudent endeavours should be used to remove that disorder, in the tenderest manner: But when all is done, they must not be unchurched, but encouraged in what is apprehended to be right. As to other things, they should be left to the compassionate care of the Great Pastor.

Neophytus. But what if any of those churches should turn *Arian*, or any other way deny the Lord that bought them; — or sink into *profaneness* and immorality?

Theophilus. Then they are no churches of Christ.

Neophytus. What if any church receive in members cut off from other churches; or such as have irregularly withdrawn therefrom?

Theophilus. That creates a great deal of confusion: But in such cases the aggrieved church should publicly, yet prudently, protest against such disorders; and thereby clear themselves in a peaceable way; still owning the church that gave the offence as a church in communion.—If any churches lack wisdom let them ask it of God.

Christophilus. Our beloved *Epenetus*, your agreeable and edifying story seems to comprehend the transactions of a pretty many years.—In the account of the first work of God at *Caerludd*, I remember you mentioned *Didwyl*, who was *Tefan's* wife's father, as one of the eminent converts: And I find he acted with the other Elders in the affair that occasioned the last messengers' meeting.—Sure by that time he must be a very old man.

Epenetus. He was so: But upon his grey hairs there was a glory. God blessed him with great abilities and faithfulness, to the very last. Quickly after that messengers' meeting, that holy man was removed to his eternal rest.

Neophytus. I should be very glad to hear, how it was with him under the arrests of death.

Epenetus. The end of that man was peace.—When he found nature hastening apace to a dissolution—in a full church meeting, from an advanced seat where he usually sat, he spoke to the church as follows:

“ My dear Brethren; it is with a great deal of pleasure that I reflect upon the time (and even
“ the

“ the very room) when I was first apprehended by
 “ grace.”—A power truly divine sweetly conquered
 “ my soul, and made me willing. Having taken upon
 “ me Christ’s yoke with and among you, I think
 “ it becomes me to testify that I have found it
 “ easy and delightful. You were pleased as a church
 “ to call me to serve Christ and you, as a *Ruling*
 “ *Elder*; and the discharge of this trust, so far as
 “ I could perform it, was my delight, though at-
 “ tended with humbling imperfections. I would
 “ now humbly bleis God for any help afforded, and
 “ for your love and obedience. The ordinances of
 “ Christ in his church have not been dry breasts
 “ to me: While worshipping with you I have
 “ tasted the joys of another world. And now, my
 “ dear brethren, I must take my leave of you:
 “ For I have some apprehensions, that I am like
 “ to come to this place no more. *Here* Christ hath
 “ often visited me, but now he sends for me to
 “ *himself*; and, if I mistake not, the time of my
 “ departure is at hand. — Keep on *your* whole ar-
 “ mour, I am just going to put *mine* off. You are
 “ in the wilderness, *watch*, therefore, and *pray* that
 “ *you enter not into temptation*. All errors, in judg-
 “ ment or practice avoid: Keep a tender *conscience*:
 “ Guard against all appearance of evil, and abhor
 “ every thing that tends to cool your *love* to Christ,
 “ and to each other. See that you strictly main-
 “ tain whatever God makes by his word a *duty*:
 “ And in all the ways of God’s judgments wait
 “ for him — Through grace I am resigned to God,
 “ and *death* is welcome to me. It hath no sting;

T 4

“ for

" for my sins that are many are forgiven. The
" righteousness of Christ imputed to me is my
" robe and wedding garment; and with his love
" am I filled. Though we part now, yet you and
" I shall meet ere long in heaven with our dear
" Lord, never to part more; for we shall be ever
" with him, and shall be like him, for we shall
" see him as he is. Unto him, this once more, I
" shall in prayer commit myself and you."

AND upon this he with great judgment and affection concluded with prayer and thanksgiving, casting himself and the church upon the rich, free and sovereign grace of God in Christ—and the whole church in tears!

Christophilus. In tears! well they might, to hear and see their honoured Elder taking his leave of them in such a manner!

Epenetus. Then he lift up his voice and said, " The Eternal God be your refuge, and underneath be the everlasting arms!" Having said this he bowed himself, and in the church said no more.

Theophilus. What a blessed parting was this!

Epenetus. His servant led him home—then he took a small refreshment, worshipped God, and was helped to his bed. Having enjoyed a little rest, he looked about him, and saw *Yefan* and his wife in the room: What, said he, *Yefan*, my son, and my father! art thou here! Blessed be God that ever I saw thee! And blessed be God that ever my daughter saw thee! Oh my dear *Araf*! never forget the amazing providence, and the all-conquering Grace of God! I am going, my dear children, I am going to Christ. His salvation is precious to me,
and

and in his love do I live. I long to be with him ; and I bless his name he is with me in this valley. Here is nothing terrible nor troublesome to me. The dissolving of my earthly house of this tabernacle is delightful to my *faith* ; nor is it in any sense very distressful. I am going to a building of God, eternal in the heavens ! Dear *Yefan*, pray with me, and then go home to take your rest. Let me, if I live, see you again to-morrow, with my dear Pastor, *Dewi*, and my Brethren the Elders and Deacons. — *Yefan* prayed and took his leave, but *Araf*, his wife, would stay with her father all night : And a pleasant soul-refreshing night it was, notwithstanding the necessary feelings of natural affections.

THE next day all his children and grand-children came to visit him ; and to every one he recommended a very close walk with God in Christ. He told them how precious Jesus Christ, as the only way to the Father, was unto him ; and that the everlasting covenant of grace was now his unspeakable comfort : — And, said he, what I am quickly to pass through, is unto me one of the *blessings* of it.

Neophytus. What a blessed song is that prepared for a poor believer — O death, where is thy sting ! — But you said the Elders were to come.

Epenetus. Yes : And so they did : And he desired *Dewi* to go to prayer ; which he did, you may justly think, with very many tears. Then *Didwyl* sat up in his bed and said :

“ My dear Brethren, great is the honour your
“ dear Redeemer hath conferred upon you, and great
“ is the trust he hath committed to you. You are
“ called to feed the church of God, which he
“ hath

“ hath purchased with his own blood : And I hope
“ you shall be helped to take heed to yourselves,
“ and to all the flock. Feed the sheep, feed the
“ lambs : The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers
“ of both. May you never sink into a sinful neglect of
“ duty towards the *children* of the church ! By what
“ I have observed, I am afraid that churches in
“ ages to come will cast off that concern. — Keep
“ together in the strictest bonds of love and unity.
“ Watch against all appearance of immorality and
“ destructive errors. Whenever you see a root of
“ bitterness springing up, delay not to remove it,
“ lest many be defiled. Always have an eye upon
“ them who seem weary of old truths, and the trod-
“ den path of christianity, affecting *novelties* in re-
“ ligion : Betimes reprove them that they may be
“ sound in the faith. — Let the *discipline*, which
“ Christ hath appointed in his house, be diligently,
“ faithfully and impartially administered. You will
“ excuse me, that I take this freedom in my de-
“ parting hours : Through Grace, it is love to Christ,
“ to his church, and to you, that puts me upon it.”

Dewi. Our dear and honoured brother, we bless
the God of all grace for the comfort you now enjoy
in the views of death, and for your precious advice.
Your usefulness among us hath been very great ;
your fellowship in the gospel exceeding precious ;
and your walk and works through grace exemplary.
— Your advantage will be our loss.

Didwyll. “ Nay, my honoured *Pastor*, — I have
“ been but poor and fruitless : Nor does the com-
“ fort, which at present I enjoy, arise from the con-
“ sideration of the least degree of perfection in any
“ per-

“ performance of mine. I have good reason to reckon on all as loss, and rely on the righteousness of Christ alone. O, *that* is my life. Justification by imputed righteousness, in views of death, I find pleasant; even as I have found it in life, ever since my conversion. Through grace, I am well persuaded that to die is gain, because Christ is my life: But with regard to your loss, if there be any, Christ will abundantly make it up. Wait on him, and walk with him.”

Haelionus. Oh my dear honoured Elder, are you going to leave us? Great is my grief; I know not how to bear it.

Didwyll. “ What, one of our dear Deacons! Be not grieved at that; Christ will never leave you, and the poor you will have always with you. God hath called you and your brethren to a very honourable work, to make a representation of his mercy, that precious attribute wherein he delighteth. I do not know but you, in some sense, may have the advantage of us all; in that you are so conversant with duties that lead your thoughts perpetually afresh, to the mercies and compassions of God. I love those more peculiarly under your care, and when I am gone, you will see what I leave for you to distribute impartially among them. Be very tender, chearful and faithful in your service. What I leave for the support and encouragement of our precious *christian school*, shall be duly taken care of, by those whom I leave in trust. — May the Redeemer’s kingdom flourish!”

Yefan. My dear Father, how is it with you?

Didwyll.

Didwyl. "The outward man decays, and the
"inward man is renewed. Christ pours into my
"soul enlarged tastes of his glory. I am full of
"joy. Tell my dear brethren, the church, that I
"die; but God will surely visit them! And though
"their affliction should increase, and their trials be
"enlarged even to persecution and martyrdom, let
"them not fear: Through the fiery trials and the
"swelling floods God will be with them. Only
"let them not in the least deny Christ before men.
"And while you live, my dear son, preach the grace
"of God, that teaches persons to deny all unrighteousness; and, together with my dear Pastor, declare the whole counsel of God."

Diwyd. O what a trial now threatens us!

Didwyl. "A trial! God hath satisfied me with
"length of days, and hath shewed me his salvation! If *this* be a trial to you, what must it
"be when God calls away your Pastor and Teacher!
"That sure will be like the over-flowings of *Jordan*.
"Well, they are not to live for ever; but the great
"Bishop abides: And He will provide for you, I
"hope, persons of great grace and abilities, steadfast in the faith, and zealous in the work of
"their Lord. — But as *Elders*, may your Lord be
"with you, to guide and direct all your steps before and among the flock! Mind your business
"with diligence, and rule well. And tell the
"Elders of sister churches, that their dying friend
"finds in his heart the dearest love to them and
"the churches, and the warmest desires for their
"true prosperity."

Theophilus. What a brave spirit was this!

Epenetus.

Epenetus. An excellent one. But they had more talk upon the concerns of Christ's kingdom here, and the glory of his saints above—the beauties of holiness, and the abundant peace that Zion shall most certainly enjoy, &c. — Thereupon one or two went to prayer, and *Didwyll* desired they would sing the cxvith *Psalms*; which they endeavoured to do: And with many tears parted with him for that night.

Neophytus. Pray, *Epenetus*, go on—let us have the last of him.

Epenetus. Next day *Dewi* and *Yefan* were there betimes: Found him very weak, but, by his expressions, his faith seemed very strong. They went to prayer: And when prayer was over, he said, “He loved me with an everlasting love, and “therefore with loving-kindness hath he drawn “me. I am almost at home: He makes my cup “to run over. To thy rest, to thy rest, O my “soul! for thy God hath dealt bountifully with “thee.” His last words were, “Let Zion flourish “—my dear Redeemer, I come.”—And so that eminent christian fell asleep in the Lord; and *Dewi* and *Yefan* closed his eyes.

Neophytus. Well, precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints! *Father*, said Christ, *I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory!* But, pray, how was it with *Dewi* and *Yefan*, in their last hours? I should be glad to be favoured with the account of them.

Epenetus. Wonderfully great did glorious grace shine there—especially upon one of them. But I
U hum.

humbly conceive, it is not expedient at *this time* to enter upon that story; for, thereby, we should leave the church without *Pastor* and *Teacher*, or be carried unavoidably into a *new* story in the ordination of others — the same for kind with what we have gone through. — “ Pray for the peace of *Jerusalem*; “ they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be with- “ in thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. “ For my brethren and companions’ sake I will “ now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the “ house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good, “ *Amen.*”

Christophilus. — The Eternal Spirit fill us, fill our families, fill the churches, and hasten the time to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of our Redeemer, as the waters cover the sea. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

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N. B. In the British words, Ch hath the genuine sound of the Greek χ , which, if unknown to the reader, may be best sounded like K. — Dd hath the sound of Th in the. — F is ever sounded like V. — Ll hath a very peculiar sound, somewhat like ethll. and in composition, the mere English reader may give it the power of thl. — C is sounded like K universally, for which reason the latter hath no place in the British alphabet — Y is sounded like U in us. — U hath a peculiar sound, somewhat like the French U in the word un.

pron. stands for pronounced.

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- Budd'ol*, Useful. His conduct to *Dewi* and *Yefan*, 27. His discourse at supper, *ibid*. A welsh saying of his, 28, *note*. His family worship, 29. Goes with *Ffyddlon* to *Caerludd*, 66.
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- Caerba'don*, Bath.
- Caergwent*, Winchester.
- Caerloyaw*, Gloucester.

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- Cyfiarwn*, Righteous. pron. *Ciwiaawn.*
- Cys'rwwys*, Crafty. pron. *Cuw'rawis.*
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IN MATTERS OF
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BY EDWARD WILLIAMS.

*I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew
mine opinion. JOB xxxii. 17.*

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